

BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK

BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK

1-2 CUT

FADE IN BEFORE MAIN TITLE:  
ESTABLISHING SHOT: - BLACK ROCK - PART OF  
TOWN: FOCAL POINT: RAILROAD STATION

2X1

abandoned, in an extreme state of dilapidation. The structure is blistered by the resolute sun, the roof is weather-warped. Dry rot and mildew wage a relentless battle against the foundation. Between the building and the tracks is a long, somewhat narrow platform, its floorboards twisted by time, termites and the elements. The match-board overhang of the building, throwing some little shade to a portion of the platform, sags and bellies. From the overhang is appended a rectangular panel on which, in flaky paint, the town is identified:

BLACK ROCK

One of the broken wires holding the panel is longer than the other, cocking the sign irregularly.

The railroad tracks reach endlessly into the horizon. Past the town on each side stretches the ocean-like prairie, with sand dunes rising and falling monotonously, shouldering each other toward infinity. The morning sun lays over this wasteland of the American Southwest, a gigantic yellow bruise from which heat waves like bloodshot arteries spread themselves over the poisoned sky.

A small shack stands next to the station, separated from it by a narrow alleyway and leaning toward the larger building, as if for support. The words

POSTAL TELEGRAPH

are arced across its dusty vitrine. An old straight-backed chair, reinforced with twisted wire, is tilted against the northwest corner of the shack. In it is Mr. Hastings, the postal telegraph agent, a man of middle years and exorbitant mediocrity. He sits there spinelessly, fingering a wart on his receding chin and, once in a while, for variety, rubbing a knuckle under his watery nose.

## SUMMARY

## BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK

No. 2

(Script dated: 5-14-54)

Due to the excessive expense of re-running entire script merely in order to obtain consecutive page numbers, the script with its changes will not be re-run, but herewith in front and back of the script you will find a summary of the total number of pages in the script.

7-10-54

Total number of pages in script including revisions to date, and based on 63 lines per page.

94

(Script completed: 5-14-54)

For a/c 20 14 pages per

I 4-12

II 14-28

III 29-36

IV 37-50

V 51-61

VI 62-71

VII 72-81

VIII 82-86

Rev. 8/12/54  
Revised

FULL SHOT - BLACK ROCK

3

The town is minute, dismal and forgotten, crouching in isolation where the single line of railroad track intersects a secondary dirt road. The twin strips of steel glisten in the fierce sunlight, fencing the dreary plain from the false fronts of the town. In b.g. is the bluff of a black stony mountain. Against this ancient mass the houses of Black Rock's single street\*\*\* (See map, P.2A) are scanty in number and insignificant in architecture, a conglomerate paint-peeled modern trussed together with rusty nails and battered tin strips torn from signs.

The town and the terrain surrounding it have, if nothing else, the quality of inertia and immutability -- nothing moves, not even an insect; nothing breathes, not even the wind. Town and terrain seem to be trapped, caught and held forever in the sullen, abrasive earth.

4 OUT

STRAIGHT SHOT - STREAMLINER

5

jarring in its power as it ramrods across the desert, its diesel engines pounding. Its horn "WONKS" twice, blasting the shatterable air.

FULL SHOT - BLACK ROCK - ANOTHER ANGLE

5X1

Nothing is changed, nothing is altered. But look close and you will see a small shallow current of wind sweeping lazily across the dirt and dust of the single street. HOLD for a beat, then MAIN TITLE appears. Between the ensuing credits INTERCUT a series of sharp LONG SHOTS. The composition of each shot has that hard, sun-beaten texture of American primitive painting -- pressurized in its simplicity -- best exemplified, perhaps, by the work of Grant Wood.

EXT. SAM'S SANITARY BAR AND GRILL - ANGLE ON  
DOC VELIE

6

assayer and notary public, mortician to the citizens of Black Rock who have departed to a better place, and veterinarian to its



\*\*\* MAP OF BLACK ROCK

N

7-14-54  
2:3.

House

House

STREET (unpaved)

Railroad  
Tracks

Sam's  
Sanitary  
Bar & Grill

General  
Store

Farm  
Equip-  
ment  
Yard &  
Office

Hotel

Doc's  
Office

MAIN STREET  
(unpaved)

Abandoned  
station  
Platform

Abandoned station

LOOPER  
YARD

Founda-  
tion  
of old  
Building

Telegraph  
Agent's  
Office

Jail

Garage

Abandoned  
Car

Graveyard

SIDE

P.2A

lesser animals. An elderly, somewhat untidy gentleman, he sits nonchalantly on a chair outside the Bar & Grill. Idling with him are three or four other loafers, among them Sam, the middle-aged proprietor of the restaurant. Doc glances casually at his watch; no one else moves. The hot wind continues listlessly down the empty street.

6  
CON1  
(2)

7-8 OUT

EXT. GARAGE - LIZ BROOKS

9

A tall, attractive girl of twenty in dungarees and cotton shirt. She stands just outside the open barn-like door of the garage, staring, from the compulsive force of habit, at the endlessly receding tracks. The sultry wind, its gustiness slightly increased, blows through her fine dark hair.

10-13 OUT

EXT. PORCH OF HOTEL - COLEY TRIMBLE AND  
HECTOR DAVID

13X1

two enormous men. HECTOR is tall, and there is about him a nasty, raw-boned tautness; COLEY is more the anthropoid type -- long thick arms and a round, iron casing of a belly. They glance down the street, watching incuriously a dust devil swirling in the wind.

Now the CAMERA has completed its probe of the town and its denizens. MAIN TITLE and CREDITS are completed . . . .

CLOSE SHOT - MR. HASTINGS

13X2

still spineless in his chair, the chair still tilted against the shack. From o.s. and far away, we hear the horn of the streamliner -- two long "WONKS", a short and a long (engine whistle signal for approach to bridge crossing). Hastings straightens up ever so slightly as he reacts to the oncoming train.

STRAIGHT SHOT - STREAMLINER

13X3

moving at tremendous speed.

BRIDGE

13X4

with train barreling toward it. The horn  
BLASTS -- three short WONKS (engine whistle  
signal for stopping at next station).

CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS

13X5

getting jerkily to his feet, as though  
charged by a galvanic current. The un-  
characteristic speed of his movements throws  
the tilted chair to the station platform.  
He raises an arm to shield his watery eyes  
from the sun . . .

Hastings (almost inaudible,  
as if to himself)  
Stopping...?

SHOT - TRAIN

13X6

heading toward CAMERA, churning across the  
desert like a juggernaut. It PANS past  
CAMERA in a blur of speed. CAMERA SWINGS  
UP on a level with the great iron wheels as  
the brakes are applied. The wheels shriek  
agonizingly against the rails, kicking up  
cinders and a wild flurry of dust. She cuts  
speed, brakes hissing, and starts to slow down.

LONG SHOT MAIN STREET - BLACK ROCK

13X7

SHOOTING from rear of town, toward the rail-  
road tracks. The townspeople step out,  
frowning, cautious, disturbed. The secure  
ritual of the train passing through, never  
stopping, has somehow, for some unknown  
reason, been violated.

CLOSE SHOT - DOC VELIE

14

as his mouth tightens. His air of placidity  
vanishes, leaving his features disturbed.

CLOSE SHOT - LIZ BROOKS

15

Her fine young face stiffens almost imperceptibly. Her eyes are coated with a vague emptiness. She seems confused as she half-turns toward the hotel.

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT SHE SEES

16

Coley Trimble and Hector David, standing on the porch of the hotel. They seem tense, responding variously to what might be fear. Coley's nostrils flare, his flat ugly mouth compresses. He looks profoundly serious. Hector wipes a glob of dusty sweat from the socket of an eye and blinks rapidly.

CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS

17

as he stands in surprise, nervously alert, watching the train as it comes to a complete stop. His jaw droops with the slackness of fear.

17X1-18

EXT. STATION PLATFORM

18X1

with the train stationary before it. A sleek steel door of a pullman clangs open. A colored porter carrying a suitcase walks down the wrought-iron steps. He is stately, gray-haired and lean, with the almost finical tidiness travelers associate with trainmen. The man behind him is big-shouldered, a granite-like wedge of a man with calm, piercing eyes. There is about him an air of monumental dependability and quiet humor, but his eyes are those of a man who has lately lived in somber familiarity with pain. His left arm hangs from his shoulder with that lifeless rigidity of paralysis, while the hand is hidden in his pocket.

ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY AND PORTER

18X1

The porter puts the suitcase on the platform. In the distance the town and its people are seen staring silently, motionlessly. The big man glances toward them. He smiles a sad, distasteful greeting to the town, its wretched dust, its mean, modest buildings. The porter



disappears into the train as the conductor enters scene. He turns slowly, following Macreeedy's gaze...

18X1  
CONT'D  
(1)

Conductor (softly, staring at the townspeople)  
Man. They look woebegone and far away.

Macreeedy (looking around)  
I'll only be here twenty-four hours.

Conductor  
In a place like this, it could be a lifetime.  
(turning to face Macreeedy)  
Good luck, Mr. Macreeedy.

Macreeedy nods his thanks. The conductor signals the engineer (o.s.) and steps on the train. The diesel's claxon blasts the torrid air ominously. The train slowly, smoothly, begins to move, picking up speed. The cars slip past until, quite suddenly, the Streamliner is gone. For a moment Macreeedy watches it. Then, quite unconsciously, he takes a package of cigarettes from his left hand pocket, taps the last one free of the pack, sticks it between his lips and, crumpling the empty pack, drops it beside the tracks. He takes a cardboard book of matches, flicks it open, bends a match in half with agile fingers, and with a sure frictional motion scrapes the head against the sandpaper guard. The match flares, the cigarette is lit. Macreeedy inhales, exhales deeply, and turns to pick up his suitcase. Then he sees Hastings, who walks slowly, almost painfully, to him. His Adam's apple grapples protestingly with his collar. After a moment he controls it sufficiently to talk...

Hastings  
You for Black Rock?

Macreeedy (easily)  
That's right.

Hastings (uneasily)  
There must be some mistake. I'm Hastings, the telegraph agent. Nobody told me the train was stopping.

Macreeedy (with a ghost of a grin)  
They didn't?

Hastings (upset)  
I just said they didn't, and they ought to. What I want to know, why didn't they?

Macreeedy (shrugging)  
Probably didn't think it was important.

18X1  
CONT'D  
(2)

Hastings  
Important?! It's the first time the stream-  
liner stopped here in four years.  
(swallowing nervously)  
You being met? You visiting folks or something?  
I mean, whatd'ya want?

Macreeedy  
I want to go to Adobe Flat. Any cabs available?

Hastings (as if he hadn't  
heard right; as if he wanted everyone  
in town to know)

Adobe Flat?!  
(he gulps, recovers slightly)  
No cabs.

Macreeedy  
Where's the hotel?

Hastings looks at him blankly. The thousand-  
yard stare of a hypnotic glazes his features.

Macreeedy (patiently)  
I asked where's the hotel?

Hastings points.

Macreeedy  
Thanks.

With his suitcase, he cuts across a weedy  
path, running into Black Rock's single  
street. For a moment, Hastings stares  
after him; then he breaks hurriedly,  
entering telegraph agent's shack.

INT. POSTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE

18X2

as Hastings, fumbling, picks up the phone...

Hastings (into mouthpiece)  
Hello, Pete? Now, listen...

REVERSE SHOT - MAIN STREET - BLACK ROCK

19

SHOOTING down the street as Macreeedy slowly  
walks toward the hotel. Not a person has  
moved, each eye is glued on the stranger.

The hollow rasp of Macreeedy's tread on the wooden platform of the "pavement" seems shatteringly loud in the enveloping silence...

19  
CONT'D  
(2)

CLOSE SHOT - LIZ

20

as she follows the man's movement.

21-22  
OUT

CLOSE ANGLE - ON MACREEEDY

23

as he walks along. He feels the eyes of everyone following him, glaring at him. He halts, looks around. The townspeople continue to eye him brazenly, yet with an almost animal incuriosity. He grins and walks on past a cluster of five or six RFD mail boxes and a road sign\*, its paint peeling, its face punctured by three or four bullets from a drunk's pistol long ago.

SHOT - MACREEEDY

24

heading toward the hotel. In b.g. is a relatively small farm equipment yard compressed between a general store (which Macreeedy has just passed) and the hotel just ahead. In the yard are a few tractors, and among them huddles a tiny office. It is empty; the front window is thick with dust. On it, etched by an anonymous, childish finger, is a skull and crossbones. Running diagonally across is the printed legend:

T.J. HATES J.S.

Macreeedy notes the inscription with a sort of wry bemusement. He walks on, reaching the facade of the weather-beaten hotel. A gust of wind swirls down the street, momentarily engulfing Macreeedy and the entire area in a sudden eddying whirlpool. As it subsides...

\* The sign should be of whatever type is feasible and compatible to terrain, emphasizing the remoteness of Black Rock. It should list three cities with arrows pointing in the proper directions:

SAND CITY 32 MILES

PHOENIX 156 MILES

ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY

24X1

As he peers through the dust toward the dingy hotel. It has a narrow stoop and outside bay windows on each side. Macreedy mounts the hotel steps. At the top of the steps Coley Trimble and Hector David watch him silently. Hector is large and leanly muscular, yet Coley looms over him like a battleship. He is a gross behemoth of a man, with sharp flinty eyes the size of glistening pinpoints and a slack, oversized jaw. Both men wear modern Western work clothes, but there is one incongruous accessory which Hector affects. Around his thick wrist is a watch with a large flat face and an elaborately tooled leather strap -- a cheap reproduction of one of those expensive Swiss timepieces which, among many distinguished accomplishments, tells the day of the week, the month of the year, the phase of the moon, etc., etc.

Macreedy (slowing up)

'Afternoon.

No reaction from Hector.

Coley (blocking doorway)

Anything I can do for you?

Macreedy

You run this hotel?

Coley

No.

Macreedy (pleasantly)

Then there's nothing you can do for me.

He brushes past Coley and enters.

Hector (turning to Coley)

Find Smith!

Coley nods and heads down the street. Hector enters the hotel.

25 OUT

INT. HOTEL

26

It is a typical small town hotel, but crummier, with a tiny lobby. Macreedy is waiting at the empty desk as Hector strolls in, flopping his enormous bulk into a nicked and mothly chair. He picks up a newspaper, but his eyes remain



on Macreeedy. Macreeedy waits patiently for the absent clerk. For a moment, he studies the open registration ledger; his eyes rove from the ink-splotched blotter up over the desk to one of those World War II banners, the imitation silk now stained and faded. It depicts a shrieking eagle rampant, clutching The Flag in a claw. Under it, the legend:

26  
CONT'D  
(2)

"GOD BLESS AMERICA"

Near it, a tacky placard proclaims:

DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,  
BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN,  
IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN,  
AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN,  
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN,  
AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.

Feeling the eyes of Hector on him, Macreeedy turns. Hector meets his gaze with bland, insolent interest. Now a young man (his name is PETE) comes out of a small room behind the registration desk and walks up to it. There is a softness about his regular features, a certain indefinable sugariness about his mouth. He seems tight-lipped, forlorn and uneasy as he faces Macreeedy across the counter.

Macreeedy (pleasantly)

I'd like a room.

Pete

All filled up.

Macreeedy (a beat)

Got any idea where I might ---

Pete (stiffly, shaking his head)

This is 1945, mister.. There's been a war on.

Macreeedy looks at the young man with impeccable tolerance. Without shifting his gaze, he slowly lets fall his small suitcase. It thuds softly on the frayed carpet.

Macreeedy

I thought it ended a couple of months ago.

Pete

Yeah, but the O.P.A. lingers on

Macreeedy looks down at the open ledger on the desk before him. The clerk reaches out to close it. Gently, yet firmly, Macreeedy stops him, reopening the big book. He studies it, a finger straying unconsciously inside his collar. He ~~turns it to relieve the starchy stiffness.~~

Pete begins to fidget...

26  
CONT'  
(3)

Pete  
You don't know about the O.P.A....

Macreeedy (without looking up)  
Tell me..

Pete  
Well, for establishments with less'n fifty rooms  
hotel keepers got to report regularly about...

His voice fades desperately.

Pete  
... about tenants and... and... registration...  
(drawing himself up)  
There are penalties imposed...

Again his voice trails off.

Macreeedy (eyes still on the  
ledger)  
You seem to have lots of vacancies.

Pete (uncomfortable)  
Well... as I said...

Macreeedy leans over the counter to a rack of  
keys. He runs his splayed fingers over the  
key rack as...

Macreeedy  
Lots of vacancies.

Pete  
They're everyone of 'em locked up. Some are show  
rooms...

Macreeedy  
Yes...?

Pete (with touching sincerity)  
...for cattle buyers, feed salesmen. The others --  
they're spoken for, rented to cowboys, ranch hands...  
(Macreeedy listens respectfully)

They pay by the month. For when they come into  
town. We provide for their every wish and comfort.  
(weakly)

You understand...?

Macreeedy  
Not really. But while I'm pondering it, get a  
room ready. Just for tonight.

(picking key from rack at random)  
This one.

Pete opens his mouth but no sound comes out.  
...at Hector.

CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR

27

glowering at Pete.

TWO SHOT - MACREEDY AND PETE

28

as Macreedy signs the ledger.

Macreedy (signing)  
Sure could use a bath. Where is it?

He picks up the key.

Pete  
Head of the stairs.

Macreedy nods, reaches for the bag at his feet.  
Then he hesitates, looks at Hector.

Macreedy  
I don't know just why you're interested -- but the  
name's Macreedy. I'm...  
(grins)  
It's all in the ledger.

Hector (slowly, his eyes glued  
to Macreedy's stiff arm)  
You look like you need a hand.

Macreedy says nothing. The wales along his  
face harden. He picks up his bag and climbs  
the stairs. As he disappears, Hector lumbers  
to the desk and grabs the ledger.

Hector (reading aloud)  
John J. Macreedy. From Los Angeles..  
(looking up)  
I wanna know everything he does, Pete. Check  
every call -- any mail.

Pete (nodding)  
And in the meantime...?

Hector (grinning harshly)  
In the meantime, I'll crowd him a little...  
(looking up the stairs)  
...see if he's got any iron in his blood...

As Pete bites his lower lip thoughtfully,

DISSOLVE:

29 OUT

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - MACREEDY

30

in a new bathrobe, before a cracked, discolored mirror. He draws a safety razor down his face, completing his shave; then he wipes a hand over the mirror, which clouds with steam almost as fast as he can clear it. O.s., the SOUND of bath water gurgling down the tub drain. He runs a tentative finger inside the collar of his robe, pulling loose a price tag. He drops it carefully into a wastebasket. He turns on the faucet at the sink to rinse his shaving brush. The rusty pipes cough and rumble, roaring as a trickle of water arrives while the drain sucks loudly at its departure. He dries the razor, turns off the faucet and exits.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - ANGLE ON MACREEDY

31

as he walks down the dark, narrow hall. He wears the bathrobe and slippers; a large towel is draped over his head, like a prize fighter. He stops outside a door, pushes the towel from his head to his neck and puts his hand on the knob. He is about to insert the key when he tenses. Slowly, silently, he turns the knob and throws open the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

32

Next to the door, in the corner of the small, sparsely furnished room is Macreedy's suitcase, open, its contents askew and scattered over the dusty floor. On the bed sprawls Hector David, his gigantic body straining the springs. He lies on his back, hands clasped easily under his head, thick legs crossed, his Stetson tilted over his low forehead. He is completely unconcerned by Macreedy's entrance. For a moment Macreedy stares at him. Then...

Macreedy (slightly amused)

I think you have the wrong room.

Hector (not budging)

You think so?

Slowly, his eyes still on Macreedy, Hector takes off his elaborate wrist watch and slides it gently into his pants pocket.

Hector:

What else you got on your mind?



Macreedy pauses and takes in the situation.  
He refuses to be baited.

32  
CONT'D  
(1)

Macreedy  
Nothing, I guess.

Hector  
If you had a mind, boy, you'd of heard what Pete downstairs said. He said these here rooms are for us cowboys. For our every wish and comfort.

Macreedy  
And this, I guess, is yours?

Hector  
When I'm in town. And I'm in town, as any fool can see. You see that, don't you, boy?

Macreedy  
I guess I do. Would you mind very much if I sort of...

(he gestures toward his suitcase and clothing)

...clean up this mess and get another room?

Hector  
Not at all. But if you want this room real bad...  
(he raises his enormous bulk to a sitting position, rubbing the knuckles of one big fist with the palm of his other hand)

...we could maybe settle your claim without all this talk.

(no answer from Macreedy)

If a man don't claim what's rightfully his'n, he's nuthin'. What do you think?

Macreeedy

32  
CONT'  
(2)

I guess so.

Hector

You guess so. But still you ain't claimin' this room?

Macreeedy

I guess not.

Hector

You're all the time guessin', boy. Don't you ever know anything?

Macreeedy

One thing I know. Since I got off the train, I've been needled. Why?

Hector (after a beat, slowly)

I guess I don't rightly know.

For a moment their eyes lock. Then Macreeedy goes to his suitcase and throws his clothes in it. As he goes out the door...

DISSOLVE TO:

33-3  
OUT

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - FULL SHOT - SAM AND THE LOAFERS

35

They sit around, each with his own thoughts. They are generally stolid; only Sam seems nervous. He looks up eagerly as Doc Valie enters the lobby. As he joins Sam...

Sam

Walks light for a big man, Doc.

Doc (straight)

Who?

Sam (irritated)

You know who!

(Doc grins impishly; Sam's anger subsides)  
What do you think, Doc?

Doc

Why ask me? He's no salesman, that's sure.  
(again the impish grin)  
Unless he's peddling dynamite.

Sam (squirming visibly)

Maybe he's a cop, or something...

Doc  
Ever see a cop with a stiff arm?

35  
CONT'D  
(2)

Sam (squinting thoughtfully)  
Maybe his arm's all right. Maybe he's just holding  
tight to something in his pocket...

Doc (scoffing)  
Like what? A pistol? A stick of T-N-T?  
(gleefully)  
To blow up this whole mangy, miserable town!  
(with sudden, almost naive, seriousness)  
Why are you so interested, Sam?

Sam  
Who, me?

Doc  
I mean, if I was that interested...  
(his eyes look up toward the hotel  
stairs o.s.)  
...I'd ask him.

Sam follows Doc's gaze...

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT THEY SEE

35X1

Macreeedy walks down the stairs. Pete looks  
up from the desk. He is about to dart behind  
the partition when...

Macreeedy  
Hey! Hold it!

He walks to the desk, smiling at Pete. In  
b.g., Doc, Sam and the loafers watch.

Macreeedy  
Got any cigarettes?

Pete studies him, then bends under the  
counter, coming up with a pack. Doc leaves Sam  
and is slowly walking toward the stranger,  
eyeing him curiously.

Pete  
This is all.

Macreeedy throws the money on the desk and opens  
the pack, dexterously using the fingers of his  
left hand.

Pete  
How long you staying?

Macreeedy  
In my new room, you mean?  
(flatly)  
I'm staying.

Pete  
I mean, in the hotel.

Macreeedy  
Just about twenty-four hours.  
(sharply)  
Why?

Pete (flustered)  
I... I was just askin'.

Macreeedy (evenly)  
Why? You expecting a convention?

Pete (doggedly)  
I was just askin'.

Macreeedy looks at him, inhales deeply on his  
cigarette then, as he slowly lets the smoke  
out, removes the cigarette and looks at it.

Macreeedy  
Stale.

Now Doc is at the desk not far from Macreeedy.  
Macreeedy starts out, then turns to Pete.

Macreeedy  
Where can I rent a car?

Pete  
I don't know.

Macreeedy smiles and sighs tiredly. Then...

Macreeedy (as to a child)  
Let's put it this way -- if I had a car and if I  
wanted to put gas in it, where would I go?

Pete (refusing to cooperate)  
But you don't have a car.

Doc (to Macreeedy)  
You might try the garage at the end of the street.

Macreeedy pauses, looking at Doc, who blandly  
returns his stare.

Macreeedy  
Thanks.

Doc nods. Macreeedy smiles and walks toward



the door; Pete, Doc et al watching him. He goes out.

35X1  
CONT'D  
(3)

EXT. STREET

35X2

As Macreeedy walks down hotel steps, a station wagon pulls up just before him. Tied with a rope to the right front fender is a magnificent eight-point buck. A stain of dry blood weaves an uneven course down his glossy flank from an unmistakable bullet hole in his shoulder. Two men get out of the car; one of them is Coley Frimble. He sees Macreeedy coming toward him. He stands motionless in the center of the narrow pavement, picking at his nose with the detachment of a child. The other man is broad and excessively masculine as he swings out from behind the wheel. He walks around the car, joining Coley at the curb. Macreeedy comes on. The man with Coley looks at the stranger with colossal indifference, as expressionless as the soil of Black Rock. His handsome face, under a dusty hunting cap, is taut and hard and wind-shaven. Next to Coley he stands motionless, except for the wisp of smoke from a black Cuban cigarette between his thin lips. In b.g., the loafers who had been ensconced in the hotel lobby move out the door and stand on the porch. They watch Macreeedy, Coley and Reno Smith, the handsome, taut-faced man. Silence seems to settle over everything. It is Macreeedy who breaks it...

Macreeedy (grinning wearily at  
Coley)  
Here we go again.

Gently he walks around Coley and Reno Smith and continues down the street. Coley's eyes follow him. Smith goes up the steps of the hotel and enters the lobby. Coley quickly follows him. The loafers on the porch go back inside.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

35X3

The loafers resume their familiar places as Smith walks briskly to the clerk's desk. Pete, in anticipation, opens the hotel register, places it before Smith

Pete (deferentially, gesturing toward the open register)  
That's all I know about him, Mr. Smith.

35X3  
CONT'D  
(2)

Smith doesn't answer; he looks up thoughtfully. His eyes harden almost imperceptibly as he sees Coley, across the narrow room, looking out the window after Macreedy.

Smith (to Coley's back)

Sit down.

Coley (spinning to face him)

I was only...

Smith (interrupting)

Sit down.

Coley sits in the nearest chair. Beyond Smith, still resting easily against the high counter of Pete's desk, the gigantic figure of Hector appears at the top of the stairs. He comes down and joins Smith.

Hector (after a pause)

Pretty cool guy.

Smith

Doesn't push easy?

Hector (frowning)

That's it -- that's just it. He pushes too easy. Maybe we oughtta...

He hesitates as Doc Velie sidles amiably into earshot.

Smith

What do you want, Doc?

Doc

Nothing.

(archly)

I was just wondering what all you people were worrying about.

(Smith looks at him coldly)

Not that I have the slightest idea.

Smith

You wonder too much, and you talk too much.

(pauses)

It's a bad parlay, Doc.

Doc

I hold no truck with silence.

(impishly)

I got nothing to hide.

Hector (suddenly towering over  
Doc)  
What're you tryin' to say?

35X3  
CONT'D  
(3)

Doc  
Nothing, man. It's just, you worry about the  
stranger only if you look at him...  
(slowly)  
...from a certain aspect.

Smith  
How do you look at him, Doc?

Doc (firmly)  
With the innocence of a fresh-laid egg.

Smith (after a pause)  
Keep it up, Doc. Be funny. Make bad jokes.  
(he starts to walk toward the window, Doc  
and Hector following him)  
And some day I'll have Coley wash out your mouth  
with lye.

Smith looks thoughtfully out the window.

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT HE SEES

35X4

Macreeedy, down the end of the block, saunters  
easily up to Liz's garage.

EXT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT

35X5

The garage, without a door, opens on the  
street. Against the front of the building is  
parked a battered bicycle. On one of the barn-  
like walls a boy of nine is drawing laboriously  
with a piece of chalk. He puts the last flou-  
rish to a skull and crossbones identical with  
that seen earlier on the window of the equip-  
ment yard office. Macreeedy stops a few feet  
from him, waiting until the boy prints "T.J."  
As he steps back to admire his handiwork...

Macreeedy  
Hi, T.J.

T.J. nods. He approaches the wall, raising his  
chalk.

Macreeedy  
This your garage?

T.J.  
Nope.

Macreeedy (a beat)  
Where's the man it belongs to?

35X5  
CONT.  
(2)

T.J.  
Ain't a man.

He pauses. As Macreeedy opens his mouth to  
interrogate further...

T.J.  
Lady runs this garage.

Again a pause. T.J. has just completed the final  
letter of the word "HATES". And again as  
Macreeedy opens his mouth...

T.J.  
She's not here.

Macreeedy  
Where'd she go?

T.J. (shrugging)  
I dunno. Somewhere.

Macreeedy  
When will she be back?

T.J.  
I dunno. Sometime.

Again the pause. T.J. steps back, having com-  
pleted his work, which, of course, broadcasts  
the fact that "T.J. HATES J.S.". And again  
as Macreeedy begins to speak...

T.J.  
In about ten minutes.

Macreeedy (with a grin)  
Thanks.

T.J. turns, pulls the bike away from the  
building, completes a fastidious "pony  
express" and peddles furiously out of scene.

EXT. STREET - FULL SHOT

35X6

as Macreeedy, after a moment's hesitation,  
starts down it. From the far end, at the  
telegraph agent's shack, a figure starts  
running toward Macreeedy. It is Hastings.  
INTERCUT between the two men. Hastings, in



his concentration, doesn't see the stranger until he is almost upon him. He slows down, suddenly, awkwardly, to a self-conscious walk. Macreedy grins at him, passes on, shaking his head speculatively. Hastings, with a parting glance, gallops up the hotel steps.

35X6  
CONT'D  
(2)

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - FULL SHOT

35X

Smith, Coley, Hector, Pete, Doc, Sam et al are still in evidence. Smith is in a tight little group at the desk with Coley, Hector and Pete. Doc has taken a position at the window, looking out. Hastings bursts in and half-runs to Smith...

ANGLE FAVORING SMITH AND HASTINGS

35X8

as the excited telegraph agent speaks.

Hastings  
I called the Circle T. He ain't got business there -- not if they don't know him. Right, Mr. Smith?

Smith ignores him, thinking. Hastings breathes heavily. Finally...

Smith (to Hastings)  
Send a wire to Nick Gandi in Los Angeles. Tell him to find out all he can about John J. Macreeedy. Tell him I want to know fast. Sign my name.

Hastings nods, scribbling on a pad.

Hastings  
What was that?

Smith  
Nick Gandi. G-A-N-D-I. Care of the Blake Hotel.

Hastings nods and hurriedly exits.

Coley (after a beat)  
Who's Gandi?

Smith looks at Coley, trying to decide if the question in any way challenges his authority. He concludes not...

Smith  
He's a private detective.  
(beat)  
I drive to L.A. now and then.

Hector (slightly worried)  
He'll get us the dope?

Smith  
He'll get us anything, for twenty bucks a day and expenses.

(Hector frowns)  
Hector, you worry too fast and too easy.

Hector  
It's just, I don't like it.

35X8  
CONT'D  
(2)

Coley  
Maybe he's just passing through.

Hector  
Don't bet on it. He can only mean trouble.

Smith (smiles faintly)  
Hector, you're jumpy as a stall horse.

Hector (doggedly)  
We oughtta see him...talk to him.

Smith (quietly)  
About what?

(Hector doesn't answer)  
What'll we talk to him about? The birds, the bees?  
The weather? The crops?  
(pauses)

You tried -- where'd it get you?

Hector (uncomfortably)  
I only thought...

Smith  
Sure. You only thought.

Coley (after a beat)  
What do we do?

Smith  
What do you do? You wait. Like Pete here. Right, Pete?

Pete nods, his brow furrowed uncomfortably in a frown.

Smith  
That's all you do. But while you wait...I talk to him.

At this point the brittle silence is cracked by...

Doc (o.s.)  
Hey!

Smith and those around him look off in the direction of Doc.

DOC VELIE - AT THE WINDOW

35X9

peering out. He turns in the direction of Smith and the others.

Doc  
 Now what do you know?  
     (beaming)  
 Mr. Macreeedy seems to be heading for the jail.  
     (impishly)  
 Now what do you suppose he'd want to see the Sheriff  
 about?

35X9  
 CONT'D  
 (2)

Smith goes to the window, edging Doc to one  
 side with a shoulder. He looks out grimly.

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT HE SEES

35X10

Macreeedy, down the street, cuts up the steps  
 of the jail.

BACK TO SCENE

35X11

Smith staring out the window with a frown. Doc  
 watching him out of the corner of his eye, a  
 bemused expression crossing his puckish  
 features.

36-41

INT. JAIL

42

ANGLE on Macreeedy as he enters the jail. It is  
 small and dirty, with only a tired desk, two  
 chairs and the usual police posters on the wall.  
 One side leads to the cell block and Macreeedy  
 heads for it.

ANGLE from interior of cell block comprising  
 two cells, both of which are open. A man is  
 asleep in the lower bunk of the front cell. The  
 keys are in the lock. Macreeedy shakes his head  
 and starts to close the creaking cell door.  
 Sheriff TIM HORN, the man in the bunk, lifts his  
 head, blinking his bleary eyes. He is in  
 terrible shape.

Tim  
 Hold it, friend.

He manages to crawl off the bunk and out  
 toward Macreeedy.

Tim (grinning)  
 I ain't hankerin' to get locked in my own jail.

Macreeedy  
 Sorry. I thought you were a guest.

Tim  
As it happens, I'm the host.

42  
CONT'D  
(2)

He walks out of the cell, Macreedy following him into the office.

SHOT - OF THE TWO

43

Tim breaks out a bottle of booze, starts to take a snort, then stops, offers it to Macreedy.

Tim  
Snort?

Macreedy  
No, thanks.

Tim  
Don't blame you. It's awful.

He takes a belt that would incapacitate half the county. He finishes, smacks his lips, lays the bottle down, and falls into a chair. He looks up at Macreedy.

Tim (suddenly mean)  
What're you lookin' at?

Macreedy (easy)  
You tell me.

Tim (after a beat, relaxing)  
I ain't always this bad -- just that last night me and my pal Doc Velie, we did a little celebratin'. At least I did.

Macreedy  
What were you celebrating?

Tim (shrugs).  
You name it.  
(studies Macreedy)  
What do you want?

Macreedy  
My name's Macreedy. I came in on the Streamliner.

Tim studies him, trying to focus.

Tim  
You what?

Macreedy  
I said I came in...

Tim (interrupting)  
You ain't from around here. Up Tucson way -  
Phoenix? Mesa? You ain't sellin' cattle nor seed  
nor nothin' like that?

Macreeedy  
No.

(sighs, then distinctly as to a child)  
All I want from you is a little information. I've  
got to get to a place called Adobe Flat.

Tim (reacts; then, tight-lipped)  
This ain't no information bureau.

Macreeedy starts to say something, then stops.  
Reconsidering...

Macreeedy  
One thing about Black Rock -- everybody's polite.  
Makes for gracious living.

Tim  
Nobody asked you here.

Macreeedy  
How do you know?  
(he moves toward the door, with a rueful  
grin)

Tim (starting after him)  
What about Adobe Flat?

Macreeedy  
I'm looking for a man named Komako.

The Sheriff reaches for his bottle. In his  
haste he drops it. Macreeedy's hand moves  
quickly, catching the bottle before it hits the  
floor.

Macreeedy  
Almost a disaster.

Tim (sinking back in his chair)  
A fate worse'n death..  
(he takes the bottle from Macreeedy)  
You move fast for a crip...fer a big man.

For a moment heavy silence. Finally...

Macreeedy  
What about Komako?

Tim (slowly)  
If there's no further questions..



Macreeedy grins harshly and exits. Tim watches him go, then slowly reaches for the bottle. He pauses, looks at his shaking hand. Then he withdraws it and just sits in the chair staring blindly ahead, seeing nothing.

43  
CONT'D  
(3)

EXT. STREET.

44

Frowning, deep in thought, Macreeedy walks down the dusty street. As he reaches the hotel...

Smith (o.s.)

Mr. Macreeedy.

Macreeedy stops, looks toward Smith as he walks out to meet him.

Macreeedy

That's the friendliest word I've heard since I got here.

As Smith joins him, he walks on. Smith falls in step beside him. GO WITH THEM.

Smith (grins boyishly)

My name is Smith. I own the Triple-Bar ranch.  
(holds out his hand; Macreeedy shakes it)  
I want to apologize for some of the folks in town.

Macreeedy

They act like they're sitting on a keg.

Smith

A keg...? Of what?

Macreeedy

I don't know. Maybe diamonds. Maybe gunpowder.

Smith (disarmingly)

No. Nothing like that. We're a little suspicious of strangers is all. Hangover from the old days. The old West.

Macreeedy

I thought the tradition of the old West was hospitality.

Smith (with a sincere smile)

I'm trying to be hospitable, Mr. Macreeedy.  
(boyishly pushes his dusty cap  
back on his head)

Going to be around for a while?

Macreeedy

Could be.

Smith  
How would you like to go hunting tomorrow? I'd  
be proud to have you as my guest.

44  
CONT'D  
(2)

Macreeedy  
Thanks, but I'm afraid not.

Smith (with admirable candor)  
You mean, because of your arm?  
(slaps Macreeedy's shoulder in a  
friendly, understanding gesture)  
I knew a man once, lost an arm in a threshing  
accident. Used to hunt all the time.  
(almost too blandly)  
But he was quite a man. He...  
(pauses; then, with discreet and  
charming gravity)  
I'm sorry. I... What I mean is -- if there's  
anything I can do while you're around...

Macreeedy  
I'm looking for...  
(sighs)  
Never mind. Thanks, anyway.

Smith (quietly)  
You're looking for what, Mr. Macreeedy?

Macreeedy (eyeing him)  
A man named Komako.

Smith (no hesitation)  
Komako -- Sure, I remember him -- Japanese farmer.  
Never had a chance.

Macreeedy  
No?

Smith  
He got here in '41 -- just before Pearl Harbor.  
Three months later he was shipped to one of those  
relocation centers.  
(shaking his head)  
Tough.

Macreeedy  
Which one did he go to?

Smith  
Who knows?

Macreeedy  
You think maybe if I wrote him, the letter would be  
forwarded?

Smith  
I'm sure it would. Write your letter, I'll see it  
gets out tonight.

Macreeedy

It wouldn't be too much trouble?

Smith

No trouble at all.

Macreeedy

Funny. Because I think it would be a great deal of trouble for you. It's been a great deal of trouble for me.

At this point they are in front of...

EXT. LIZ'S GARAGE

45

Macreeedy stops, as does Smith. He looks keenly at Smith as he takes from his inner jacket pocket a half-dozen letters...

Macreeedy

I wrote these letters to Komako. They weren't forwarded. They were returned -- address unknown.  
(he smiles grimly at Smith)

So I guess there's nothing you can do for me, after all.

Smith opens his mouth to reply when the NOISE of a jeep o.s. interrupts him. The jeep comes INTO SHOT. Liz Brooks, at the wheel, cuts the engine and jumps out. Smith ambles silently to a wall and leans against it. Liz reaches behind the driver's seat and hoists, with both hands and some effort, a five-gallon drum of axle grease from the floor of the jeep. As she rests it on the rear fender...

Macreeedy (going to her)

Need a little help?

The girl looks at Smith, who has made no attempt to help her.

Liz

I can manage.

She lifts the drum to the ground.

Macreeedy

Well, I need a little help.

(she looks at him questioningly)

I'd like to rent your jeep.

Liz

It'll be two dollars an hour, gas extra, and ten dollars for my time.

Smith (to Liz)  
Aren't you going to ask him where he wants to go?

45  
CONT  
(2)

Liz looks from Smith to Macreeedy, puzzled.

Smith  
He wants to go to Adobe Flat.

Liz hesitates. Macreeedy notes her confusion  
as her eyes seek Smith's for instructions.  
Quickly he moves in...

Macreeedy  
The road's marked?

Liz (nodding)  
Yeah. It's about six - seven miles down...

Macreeedy  
Then I won't need your time.

Macreeedy hands her a bill. She fumbles with  
it, not knowing what else to do. Her eyes  
drift to Macreeedy's stiff arm...

Liz (uneasily)  
I thought you might...need a little help.

Macreeedy  
I can manage.

He steps toward the jeep as...

Smith  
Liz. Do you have a license to rent cars? You  
could get into trouble.

Macreeedy  
It's all right. I won't mention it to the Sheriff.

He steps into jeep and, with one hand expertly  
manipulating the controls, drives off.

MED. SHOT - SMITH AND LIZ

45X1

Smith turns his attention to the girl...

Smith (slowly)  
You shouldn't have done that.

Liz  
I thought it would be better if he went out there  
and got done with it.

(Smith looks at her sharply)  
I mean, what could he find out?

For a moment Smith doesn't answer. Instead, with a half frown, he lifts the bill Macreeedy had given her from Liz's hand.

45X1  
CONT'D  
(2)

Smith (as he studies it)  
This is liable to be the hardest ten dollars you ever earned in your life.

He crumples it, pokes the wad in her hand and walks off down the street as...

QUICK DISSOLVE:

46-47  
OUT

INT. JAIL - FULL SHOT - DAY

47X1

Tim sits in his chair, still staring sightlessly at the whiskey bottle. Smith enters. He looks from Tim to the bottle on the table, then back to Tim.

Smith (after a beat,  
disinterestedly)  
What did he want -- the stranger?

Tim (abstractedly)  
He asked about Komako.  
(looking up at Smith)  
You think he'll kick up a storm?

Smith (easily)  
A storm? About what?

Tim  
I don't know. All I know, I don't want trouble  
around here.

47X1  
CONT'  
(2)

(pauses awkwardly, then)  
Never again.

Smith  
Trouble? You don't know anything about Komako,  
now do you, Tim?

Tim  
I do not. That's the point.

Smith  
The point is, what you don't know can't hurt you.

Tim  
Maybe there's something I ought to know. Maybe I  
ought to ask you...before the stranger comes back  
and starts breathing down my neck.

Smith (a faint smile)  
Tim, you're a lost ball in the high weeds. I told  
you a long time ago, nothing happened for you to  
worry about.

Tim (stands up, facing Smith)  
Thing is, I do worry. Maybe I ain't much else, but  
I'm sure a worrier.

(beat, then with soft emphasis)  
And I'm still the law.

Smith  
Then do your job, Tim.

Tim  
What is my job, Mr. Smith? Maybe I'd better find  
out before Macreeedy does it for me.

Smith (evenly)  
Macreeedy'll do nothing, Tim. And neither will you.

Tim  
Suppose I decide to try?

Smith  
That would be dangerous. You got the body of a  
hippo, Tim, but the brain of a rabbit. Don't over-  
tax it.

He stares harshly at the Sheriff. Tim tries  
unsuccessfully to meet his gaze. Then, slowly,  
he sits down.

Tim (lowering his eyes,  
mumbling)  
Yes, Mr. Smith.

Bad Day at Black Rock  
Chgs. 7-8-54 P.30

Smith slowly walks behind Tim's chair and  
silently, patronizingly pats the Sheriff's  
slack shoulder...

47X1  
CONT'D  
(3)

INT. TELEGRAPH AGENT'S OFFICE - FULL SHOT

48

Hastings is sitting at his desk. The  
telegraph ticker starts to splutter.  
Hastings rushes to it. He listens, and  
starts to scribble. Then he gulps nervously,  
a confused expression on his face. As the  
telegraph key stops as suddenly as it had  
begun, Hastings jumps up frantically and,  
holding the sheet of paper, runs out of the  
shack.

EXT. STREET

48X1

as he runs toward hotel.

EXT. HOTEL - LONG SHOT

48X2

with Doc, Sam, Coley, Hector and Pete on  
the porch. Hastings runs up the steps, paus-  
ing momentarily. His jaws move, but CAMERA  
is too far away to pick up his obvious  
question. Coley gestures toward the jail;  
then Hastings turns and runs down the steps  
followed by Doc et al.

EXT. STREET - FULL SHOT

48X3

Hastings runs down the street toward the  
jail followed by Doc et al.



EXT. JAIL

as Hastings runs up the steps with a hob-nailed clatter. Smith comes out to investigate, followed by Tim. Doc, et al are congregated at the foot of the steps. Hastings slaps the sheet of paper in front of Smith. Utter quiet. Everyone stares at Smith, waiting for a reaction -- everyone except Tim, who stares straight ahead, seeing nothing, and Doc, whose eyes are locked sympathetically on Tim. Smith finishes reading the wire. His face is expressionless. After a moment...

Hector (to Smith)

From L.A.?

Smith doesn't answer but...

Hastings

Yeah! From that private detective!

Hector (to Smith)

What does he say? Who is this guy?

Hastings

Never heard of him, that's what he says! He checked and there's no John J. Macreedy. No listing -- no record -- no information. Nothing.

Pete (quietly, after a beat,

to Smith)

Where does that leave us?

Coley

I'll tell you where...

Smith

Shut up!

He folds the message carefully, puts it in his pocket. Abruptly Tim turns and disappears inside his office. Smith, with some restraint, walks down the steps to the street.

MOVING SHOT - SMITH

as he takes Coley's arm, and Pete's. The trio moves away, taking a position perhaps 15 feet from Doc. Hector, Sam and Hastings move toward them.

48X5

49-50

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - SMITH, COLEY AND PETE 50X1

In b.g. at a respectful distance are Hector, Sam and Hastings. SHOOT parallel to tracks, which disappear far into the horizon..

The following dialogue is delivered in an undertone...

Smith (turning to Coley)

Now, Coley...?

Coley (takes a breath, then)  
I think Macreeedy's a nothing.. A nobody.

Smith

Is he?

Coley  
So there's nothing to worry about.

Smith

Isn't there?  
(a beat)  
You got brains, you have..

Coley (squirming) -  
But what can he find out? That Komako was...?  
(Smith glares at him)  
Suppose he finds out?

Smith

A nobody like Macreeedy can raise a pretty big stink. The point is...who would miss a nobody like Macreeedy if he just, say, disappeared?  
Who, Coley?

Coley is terribly preoccupied, balances himself, like a child, on a steel rail.

Smith (exasperated)

Coley!

Coley (galvanized from the rail)

Huh?

Pete

Why don't we wait...

Smith

Wait for what?

Pete

I mean, maybe he won't find anything. Maybe he'll just go away.

Smith

Not Macreeedy. I know those maimed guys. Their minds get twisted. They put on hair shirts and act like martyrs. They're all of 'em do-gooders, trouble makers, freaks.

50X1  
CONT'D  
(2)

Pete

But there's no danger yet. Let's wait and see.

Smith (interrupting, appealing  
to Coley as an equal)

No danger, he says. This guy's like a carrier of

(continued)

Smith (continued)

small pox. Since he arrives, there's been a fever in this town, an infection. And it's spreading.

(he glances from Coley to Pete)

Hastings has been in a sick sweat, running around, shooting off his face. Doc, for the first time in four years, gets snotty with me. Liz...

(to Pete)

...your own sister -- acts like a fool.

Pete (hotly)

She's just a kid.

Smith (scoffing)

Kid! She must have strained every muscle in her head to get so stupid! Renting him a jeep! And Tim -- Tim, the rum-dum. Tim suddenly decides he's gotta act like a Sheriff.

(to Coley, gesturing at Pete)

And he says what's the danger.

Brittle silence for a moment. Then...

Smith (easily)

Of course, if you want to take the chance...

Pete doesn't answer.

Coley (grimly)

Not me.

Smith.

All right, then...

Pete

It's not all right! You're so mighty quick to kill -- he's not an animal!

Smith (to Coley, with mock surprise)

Well, listen to little spitfire...

(turning slowly on Pete)

You sniveling toad! I'm saving your neck! If I don't, who will?

Pete (squirming)

All I said...

Smith

Who will?! Doc? Tim? Your sister, with the rocks in her head?

Pete is silent.

Smith  
One thing about your sister -- she's got twice  
the guts you have. You're only fit for running  
away.

50X1  
CONT'  
(4)

Coley  
It's too late for that.  
(belligerently, slowly, at Pete)  
He's in this, and he ain't running no place.

There is a long, electric silence. Pete  
is defeated.

Smith (finally)  
All right, then...

He pauses for emphasis. Then, as he starts  
to talk again...

INT. JAIL

50X2

Tim stands facing the wall, shoulders hunched,  
suffering. Doc comes in and watches him  
silently, Tim turns, facing Doc, turns again  
to concentrate on a faded newspaper photograph  
framed and hanging on the wall.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TIM

50X3

SHOOTING over his shoulder. Focal point:  
the "photograph". It shows a widely grinning,  
moderately alert and healthy Tim of perhaps  
five years ago. He is wearing, proudly, his  
badge of office, and behind him, mildly  
interested in the proceedings, is Reno Smith,  
his erstwhile sponsor. The heading on the  
photo reads: DEPUTY SHERIFF NAMED FOR BLACK ROCK.

MED. SHOT - TIM AND DOC

50X4

Tim takes the photo off the wall and, holding  
it, turns to face Doc...

Tim  
Let Smith find himself a new boy. I can't take it  
another day.

(pauses, looks at Doc)  
If you're a sheriff, they gotta respect you, other-  
wise you can't do your job.

(shakes his head)  
They just laugh.

I don't laugh, Tim. Doc

Why don't you? Tim

Cut it out, Tim. Doc

You should! Tim

In the name of well-adjusted manhood, snap out of it. You're going to get a complex or something. Doc

Four years ago if I'd of done my job...if I'd of checked up and found out what happened. But I didn't! Just like Smith figured. Tim

Doc  
What could you have found out? They told you a story. You had to believe it.

50% CONTIN (3)

Tim  
Do you believe it?

Doc squirms but doesn't answer.

Tim  
Do you know what happened?

Doc  
I don't know.  
(ironically)  
I lead a quiet, contemplative life.

Tim  
Me, I didn't even try to find out.  
(a beat)  
Don't you understand?  
(he taps the badge on his chest)  
When you wear that badge, you're the Law. And when something happens, against the Law, you're supposed to do something about it. It's your job.  
(simply)  
Me...I did nothin'. And that's what's eatin' me. What kind of prescription you got for that?

Doc  
I don't know. I've never been able to find one for myself.

Tim takes off his badge and throws it on the desk.

Doc  
Only one thing -- don't quit, Tim.

Tim  
Why not?

Doc  
Maybe this feller Macreeedy has the prescription.

They look at each other. Slowly Tim picks up his badge and pins it back on.

51-85 OUT

EXT. DESERT ROAD

86

An old marker, jutting on an angle at the side of the road, reads: ADOBE FLAT. Beneath it an arrow points ahead. Macreeedy steers the jeep up the narrow, rutted trail between a serious of enormous boulders.



ANOTHER ANGLE

87

as he drives to the far end of the boulders, reaching a flat piece of land completely surrounded by rocks. Beyond the rocks is what remains of a burned-out ranch house, and an abandoned well.

88 OUT

MED. SHOT - MACREEDY

89

in the wreckage. The remains of an iron bed. The burned-out shell of a pick-up truck. Part of a stove. A morass of bottles, all sizes and shapes, some of them broken. Macreedy halts momentarily beside the well. Reaching out he touches the warped sun-beaten boards that cover the mouth. He removes one, and, picking up a pebble, drops it through the opening. There is a long beat and then, from far, far below we HEAR a faint PLUNK (o.s.). He replaces the board and walks to a broken wall. He touches the burned out frame of a picture. The frame falls to the ground, leaving an unscorched square on the surface of the wall. He goes past a solitary standing stone chimney. Suddenly he halts, arrested by something among the rubble, the rottenness and the ashes.

REVERSE ANGLE - WHAT HE SEES

89X1

Surrounded by the seared and blackened earth is a rectangular patch of lovely wild flowers.

BACK TO MACREEDY

89X2

studying the brightly colored flowers. His face is lined in thought. He stoops, gathers a few buds in his hand. He examines them, his brow furrowed. As he slowly twirls a flower between thumb and forefinger, CAMERA PANS from Macreedy in a long slow arc, taking in miles and miles of barren wasteland. CAMERA RISES, TILTING UPWARD to a cliff far away and shielded from Macreedy's view by the intervening rocks and ridges.

EXTREME LONG SHOT - CLIFF

89X3

and on it the outline of an automobile.

MED. SHOT - THE CAR

89X4

empty. It is parked on a narrow dirt road. On one side of the road the cliff falls abruptly to the valley far below; on the other, the steep, shaly outcropping continues to rise. For a moment CAMERA HOLDS on the car. Then it PANS SLOWLY upward about fifty feet, HOLDING this time on...

PINNACLE OF CLIFF

89X5

where a man is looking off toward Adobe Flat through a pair of high-powered glasses. The man is Coley Trimble.

ADOBE WELLS - MACREEDY

89X6

Grimly he walks toward the jeep, still holding the wild flowers. Now he pockets them, jumps into the vehicle and drives off.

THE CLIFF - COLEY

89X7

continues to train his glasses on Macreeedy far below in the moving jeep.

THE JEEP - MACREEDY

89X8

driving steadily over rough, rocky terrain.

COLEY

89X9

climbs down from the pinnacle of the cliff and enters a big, powerful '36 Packard sedan.

MACREEDY

89X10

shifts to low gear as the jeep presses into hilly country.

COLEY - IN HIS CAR

89X11

turns on the ignition.

MACREEDY - IN THE JEEP

89X12

as it winds along a road with the cliff rising on one side and falling off steeply on the other. He rounds a curve, passes an insignificant side road, drives on.

THE SIDE ROAD

89X13-  
89X18

The car with Coley at the wheel pulls out, follows Macreedy.

INTERCUT between the two cars, with the distance between them constantly diminishing.

90-98. OUT

EXT. - FLAT ROAD

98X1

a straightaway, cutting through rocky outcroppings on both sides. Macreedy's jeep roars by, pursued by the gaining Packard.

CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY IN JEEP - (PROCESS)

98X2

For the first time he is aware that he is being followed, and that the man at the wheel of the big Packard is Coley.

SHOT - PACKARD

98X3

picking up tremendous speed.

EXT. - ROAD BED

98X4

proceeding over a series of turns, inclines, declivities (according to location terrain). Engines roar, brakes whinny, tires scream, skidding on the turns.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ROAD BED

98X5

as Coley overtakes Macreedy. He steers the big car within a foot or two of the jeep. The terrain has steepened; on the right there is nothing between the road and the valley floor far below but a few inches of soft shoulder.

As Macreeedy pulls wide on a razor turn, Coley tries to come inside him. Macreeedy, fighting for control of the veering jeep, succeeds in cutting him off.

98X5  
CONT'D  
(2)

CURVE IN ROAD

98X6

In the approach, Coley cuts sharp into the jeep. The jeep seems to roll with the blow, then leaps ahead, maneuvering the turn.

CLOSE SHOT COLEY IN CAR (PROCESS)

98X7

Coley is flustered, his face blood-shot with fury. He seems to generate an atmosphere of vicious, cruel craziness; the wild smile across his mouth is almost sensual, obscene. He floorboards the Packard. Like some monstrous battering ram, the heavy car smashes into the jeep's rear bumper, kicking the smaller vehicle jerkily ahead. Coley floorboards the gas pedal, again. Each time he slams into the jeep with sickening force, with the brutal abrasion of metal pounding metal.

CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY - (PROCESS)

98X8

With one arm he works frantically to keep his under-sized car on the twisty road. He sees ahead a precipitous cliff falling off on an impossibly sharp curve. He makes a decision...

Just ahead the gradient is comparatively gradual, however steep by normal standards. He swings the jeep off the road, onto the declivity. The car plunges downward, miraculously upright. Macreeedy jockeys it to a whirring, shuddering halt in the soft sand at the bottom of a draw.

Macreeedy turns slightly and looks up the mountain-side with the road at its summit...

WHAT HE SEES: EXTREME LONG SHOT - COLEY

98X9

standing at the edge of the road, peering down at him. In b.g., the Packard. Coley turns emphatically, gets into car, drives off.

BACK TO MACREEDY

98X10

His face is caked with the sweat of his exertions and dust kicked up by the grinding wheels. He exhales heavily and runs a shaky hand across the side of his head. He becomes aware suddenly of a NOISE, a trickling, an unmistakable tinkle as of running water. He frowns, opens the jeep door...

MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP

98X11

as Macreedy unlatches the hood and throws it open. The NOISE continues. Macreedy examines the engine and finds the difficulty...

INSERT - ENGINE

98X12

focal point: the nut joining the gas line with the carburetor has worked loose in the jouncing the car has taken. With his hand Macreedy screws it tight.

MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP

98X13

as Macreedy lowers the hood, re-enters jeep. He turns on ignition. The engine fires. As he drives slowly out of the ravine...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BLACK ROCK - MAIN STREET  
CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR

99

his long face even more horsey than usual, with half an apple in his mouth. He stands in front of the grocery store, with the baskets of fruit on the sidewalk. He looks up, stops crunching.

CLOSE SHOT - SAM

99X1

at the window of the Bar & Grill, cleaning an ear with a toothpick. He looks out. The toothpick is motionless.

CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS

99X2

fidgeting outside his shack. He looks up.  
His Adam's apple turns completely over.

100-101 CUT

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT THEY SEE

102

Macreeedy slowly driving the jeep toward Liz's  
garage. He looks neither to the right nor  
left.

GROUP SHOT - FAVORING SMITH AND COLEY

103

Standing on the porch of the hotel, watching.  
Smith's face compresses, and his eyes swivel  
to rest on Coley's with cold, contemptuous  
anger. Coley licks his lips uneasily. Smith  
turns and enters the hotel. Coley meekly  
follows.

FULL SHOT - MACREEEDY

104

He brakes the jeep before the garage. No one  
is there. He parks the vehicle, gets out and  
heads down the street.

EXT. HOTEL

105

Macreeedy is about to go up the steps when he  
sees Coley's car at the curb. Both right  
fenders are creased. An ugly, jagged break has  
split the front bumper almost in half, one  
part angling crazily toward the sky, the other  
drooping in the dust of the road. Smith and  
Coley come out of the hotel. They stand on the  
porch, watching Macreeedy as he in turn watches  
the car. They exchange a glance. Smith nods,  
so...

Coley

Well, if it's not Macreeedy - the world's champion  
road hog.

He walks down the steps to the street, joining  
Macreeedy. Smith remains on the porch.

Macreeedy

Yeah. It's a small world.

Coley  
But such an unfriendly one. Now why did you want  
to crowd me off the road?

105  
CONT'D  
(2)

Macreeedy (with a slow grin)  
I'm kind of sorry if I've incurred your displeasure.

Coley  
Look what you did to my car.

Macreeedy  
If there's anything I can do to make up for it...

Coley  
You ought to be careful, man -- all that one-arm  
driving.

Macreeedy  
I'd be glad to pay the damages.

Coley  
It's a threat to life and limb.

Macreeedy  
Fortunately no one was hurt.

Coley  
You could get yourself killed that way -- nosin'  
all over the countryside.

Macreeedy  
That's the real danger, I can see that.

Coley  
Why that's pretty smart of you. How long you  
intend to keep it up?

Macreeedy  
I'm getting out of here, right now.

He walks up the steps, past Smith, and into  
the hotel. Coley glances up at Smith,  
grinning with self-satisfaction, like a small  
boy who has carried out perfectly the  
instructions of his teacher.

INT. HOTEL

106

The lobby empty except for Pete behind the  
desk. Macreeedy goes to him. Pete seems  
elaborately occupied arranging and re-arranging-  
a few file cards. Smith enters the lobby. He  
stands in b.g. watching Macreeedy and the desk  
clerk.



Macreeedy (to Pete)  
Still expecting that convention?

106  
CONT'D  
(2)

Pete (looking up)  
What...?

Macreeedy  
If you're expecting any extra cowboys, my room  
is available.

Pete  
You're checking out?

Macreeedy (nodding)  
Is there a train through here tonight?

Pete  
Nothing till tomorrow morning. The streamliner.

Macreeedy  
I know that. How about freights?  
(Pete shakes his head)  
Milk train?

Pete  
Tomorrow. After the streamliner.

Macreeedy  
Busses?

Pete  
Closest stop is Sand City - thirty-two miles away.  
(a beat)  
You're in such a hurry, you should have never got  
off here.

Macreeedy  
I'm inclined to agree with you.

He turns, walks toward porch. Pete looks at  
Smith. Smith's eyes follow Macreeedy.

107 OUT

INT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT.

108

In the gloom of the lube pit, Liz's mechanic,  
a dirty old man, is draining the oil out of the  
crankcase of the car on the rack. The girl  
stands beside the pit, silently watching the  
old man. Now she pauses, looks o.s. toward  
the open garage doors....

WHAT SHE SEES - MACREEDY

109

entering the scene, stopping to look at Liz's jeep parked in front of the wide doors. He turns his eyes vaguely in the direction of Liz, but he doesn't see her in the shadows behind the car on the rack. He advances a step, pausing...

Macreedy

Anybody home?

110 OUT

EXT. LUBE PIT - LIZ

110X1

She does not answer. Instead, she silently twists the crankcase petcock, stopping the flow of oil. She watches Macreedy closely.

INT. GARAGE

111

Macreedy again shifts his eyes to the jeep, then, with decision, he goes to a work bench, opening the drawers and rummaging among the contents.

Liz (o.s.)

If you're looking for the jeep key...

Macreedy turns as Liz comes toward him. She gestures toward the open drawers.

Liz

...it's not there...

Macreedy waits for her to go on. She doesn't. She stands there, staring at him.

Macreedy (after a beat)

In that case, where do you suggest I look?

She turns, walks back toward the lube pit.

Liz (over her shoulders)

The jeep's not for rent.

Macreedy

It was, just a few hours ago.

Liz (flatly)

Things change..

Macreedy (with grim amusement)

Sure.. And Smith is the kid who changes 'em.

She doesn't answer. Macreedy goes to her.

Macreeedy  
Miss Brooks.  
(softly)  
What's the matter with this town of yours?

Liz  
Nothing. It's none of your concern.

Macreeedy  
Then why are they all so concerned about me?

Liz  
Am I concerned?

Macreeedy  
No, you're not. But...

Liz  
But what?

Macreeedy (easily)  
But it strikes me you're a little too unconcerned.  
So unconcerned you won't even rent me a jeep.

Liz (flaring)  
I don't run a taxi service. I don't have a license.

Macreeedy  
I wish others in this town were as scrupulously  
devoted to law and order as you are.

Liz (hotly)  
Why don't you lay off! If you don't like it here,  
go back where you came from!

Macreeedy  
Funny thing. They try to kill me, and you feel  
persecuted.

Liz  
I don't want to get involved.

Macreeedy  
Involved in what?

Liz (retreating)  
Whatever you're up to. Whatever happens, I've got  
to go on living here. These people are my neighbors,  
my friends.

Macreeedy  
All of them?

Liz (slowly)  
This is my town, Mr. Macreeedy, like it or not.  
Whatever happened here, it was long ago, now it's...  
it's...

Macreeedy (evenly)  
Dead and buried?  
(a beat)

Whatever did happen, you don't seem to like it.  
Why do you stick around?

Liz (after a beat)  
Because of my brother. Pete. He'd never leave.

Macreeedy  
Didn't you ever think of going without him. You're  
sort of independent and he's...he's...

Liz  
Weak. I know. That's why I couldn't leave him.

Macreeedy (softly)  
What did your brother do?

Liz  
He...I...  
(flaring again)  
What do you care? What do you care about Black Rock?

Macreeedy  
Nothing much. Only, there're not many places like  
this in America -- but even one is too many. Be-  
cause I think something sort of bad happened here.  
(frowning)  
Something I can't find the handle to...

Liz  
You just think so. You don't know.

Macreeedy  
This much I know -- the rule of law has been sus-  
pended in this town. The gorillas have taken over.

Liz  
You're a fine one to talk! You come in here, sneak-  
ing around, trying to steal the key to my jeep.

Macreeedy  
I kind of had a notion that was the only way I  
could get it.

She opens her mouth to answer, but she doesn't  
know what to say.

Macreeedy (simply)  
Was I wrong, Miss Brooks?

He waits as she tries to answer, and again  
she can't. For a moment he watches her  
struggle in anguished silence with herself.  
Then he turns and goes out.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MACREEDY

111X1

walks thoughtfully down street. He comes abreast of hotel.

EXT. PORCH OF HOTEL

111X2

where Smith is still sitting. For a moment he watches Macreedy speculatively, then...

Smith (calling)

Mr. Macreedy.

(reasonably, as Macreedy turns toward him)  
I'd like to ask you a few questions...as long as you're around...

Macreedy (walking up steps)

I'm around all right.

He stands facing Smith on the porch, then...

Macreedy (with just a touch of wryness)

You probably know that Miss Brooks is no longer in the car rental business?

Smith (solemnly)

Good. I wouldn't want to see that girl get into trouble...

Macreedy

You wouldn't?

Smith

...what with rental permits, gas rationing...you know what I mean.

Macreedy

Sure. I admire your sturdy sense of responsibility.

Smith (dismissively)

It's just, a girl like that has a future.

Macreedy

Let's talk about my future.

Smith (almost slyly)  
Do you have the time?

111X2  
CONT'D  
(2)

Macreeedy  
I don't seem to be going any place.

He takes the other chair.

Smith (after a pause)  
I hear you handle a jeep real well.

Macreeedy  
I have a way with jeeps. A certain familiarity.

Smith  
I think I understand. You're an Army man.  
(looking at Macreeedy's stiff arm)  
Where'd you get it?

Macreeedy  
Italy.

Smith (sincerely)  
Tough. I tried to get in myself, the day after  
those rats bombed Pearl Harbor.

Macreeedy  
What stopped you?

Smith  
The physical. They wouldn't take me. The morning  
after Pearl, I was the first man in line at Marine  
recruiting in Sand City. And they wouldn't take me.

Macreeedy (flatly)  
Tough.

Smith  
What do you do in Los Angeles, Mr. Macreeedy?

Macreeedy  
I'm retired.

Smith  
You're a pretty young man...

111X2  
CONT'D  
(3)

Macreeedy  
You might say I was forced into retirement.

Smith  
What were you looking for in Adobe Flat?

Macreeedy  
Komako, like I told you. Like you told me, he  
wasn't there.

Smith laughs quietly.

Macreeedy  
What's so funny?

Smith  
Nothing. It's just -- I don't believe you. I  
believe a man is as big as what he seeks. I  
believe you're a big man, Mr. Macreeedy.

Macreeedy  
Flattery will get you nowhere.

Smith  
Why would a man like you be looking for a lousy Jap  
farmer?

Macreeedy  
Maybe I'm not so big.

Smith  
Yes, you are.  
(a beat; looking hard at Macreeedy)  
I believe that a man is as big as the things that make  
him mad. Nobody around here has been big enough to  
make you mad.

Macreeedy  
What makes you mad, Mr. Smith?

Smith  
Me...? Nothing in particular.

Macreeedy (bemused)  
I see. You're a big man, too. Only...  
(calmly)  
...the Japanese make you mad...

Smith  
That's different. After the sneak attack on Pearl  
Harbor...after Bataan...

Macreeedy  
...and Komako made you mad.

111X2  
CONT'D  
(4)

Smith

It's the same thing.

(scoffing)

Loyal Japanese-Americans -- that's a laugh. They're mad dogs. Look at Corregidor, the death march.

Macreeedy

What did Komako have to do with Corregidor?

Smith

Wasn't he a Jap? Look, Macreeedy, there's a law in this county against shooting dogs. But if I see a mad dog loose, I don't wait for him to bite me.

(exhales sharply, shaking his head with irritation)

I swear, you're beginning to make me mad.

Macreeedy (calmly)

All strangers do.

Smith

Not all. Some of 'em. When they come here snooping.

Macreeedy

Snooping for what?

Smith

I mean, outsiders coming around, looking for something.

Macreeedy (pressing)

For what?

Smith

I don't know. People are always looking for something in this part of the West. To the historian, it's the "Old West." To the book writers, it's the "Wild West." To the businessmen, it's the "Underdeveloped West." They all say we're backward and poor, and I guess we are.

(snorts)

We don't even have enough water.

(a beat)

But this place, to us, is our West.

(heatedly)

I just wish they'd leave us alone.

Macreeedy

Leave you alone to do what?

Smith (coldly)

I don't know what you mean.

Macreeedy

What happened to Komako?

Smith

He went away, I told you. Shortly after he left, a bunch of kids got fooling around out his place. They burned it down. It was one of those things -- you know how kids are.



Macreeedy laughs quietly.

Smith

What's funny?

Macreeedy

Nothing. Only -- I don't believe you. Any more than I believed you about the letters.

Smith (smiling)

You don't seem to believe anything I say.

Macreeedy (vaguely)

Yes, I do -- about businessmen, for instance. I think a businessman would be interested in Adobe Flat.

Smith

Why?

Macreeedy

All that land lying fallow. Could be put to some use. Like a graveyard.

(Smith opens his mouth to speak but Macreeedy goes on)

A historian might be interested, too. Because of the strange customs around here, such as burying cattle...

Smith

Burying cattle...?

Macreeedy (calmly)

Something's buried out there.

He takes the wild flowers from his pocket, holding them in front of Smith.

Macreeedy

See these wild flowers? That means a grave. I've seen it overseas. I figure it isn't a man's grave or someone would have marked it. Sort of a mystery, isn't it?

Smith

Sort of. Maybe you can figure it out.

Macreeedy gets up, half turns to Smith.

Macreeedy

Maybe.

He starts down the steps.

Smith

Why not give it a whirl?

(Macreeedy turns)

It'll help you pass the time...

...for a while.

Smith (continued; meaningfully)

111X2  
CONT'D  
(6)

Macreeedy  
Not interested. I got other things to do.

He turns and walks down the street.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MACREEDEY

112

headed towards Doc's establishment. The building, which serves Doc as home, office and laboratory, has centered on a pane of glass:

T.R. VELIE, JR.  
UNDERTAKER  
AND  
VETERINARY

And in the lower right hand corner:

ASSAYER  
NOTARY PUBLIC

A few of the peeled gold and black letters are completely missing.

The building is separated from the structure next to it by an alleyway. Filling the narrow passage is Hector David, his long massive body wedged against the wall like an unkempt monument. His little pig eyes meet Macreeedy's. Hector spits in the dust with bland insolence.

EXT. DOC'S OFFICE - MACREEDEY

113

walks up the steps and enters.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE

114

Dark and shadowy. At the far end of a hallway an insipid light bulb burns. Macreeedy goes toward it, entering...

INT. DOC'S LAB

115

devoted to the care and preservation of the Dear Departed. In the center of the room is a long rectangular slab stained with the juices

of those unfortunates who have had occasion to rest thereon. The walls are lined with rickety bookcases jammed, not with volumes, but with the jugs and jars, the chemicals and unguents of Doc's multiple callings. In a corner three or four neat pine boxes are stacked one on the other.

115  
CONT'D  
(2)

Doc sits at a cluttered desk feeding a large bowl of goldfish and sipping a glass of milk. He looks up as Macreeedy enters.

Doc  
Hi. Pull up a chair.

Macreeedy (nodding)  
Can I use your phone?

Doc  
Help yourself.  
(chuckles)  
You know, you're one of the few people who's ever been back here I can say that to.

Macreeedy reaches for the phone book.

Doc  
It's 4-2-4.

Macreeedy (pausing)  
What's 4-2-4?

Doc  
If I've got you pegged-- and I think I have-- you're calling the State Police. But if I was you --and I'm purely glad I'm not-- I'd look it up myself.  
(emphatically)  
I wouldn't trust anybody around here, including me.

Macreeedy thinks it over and comes to a swift decision. He checks the phone book. Then, picking up phone...

Macreeedy (to Doc)  
Thanks.  
(into receiver)  
4-2-4.

INT. TELEPHONE OPERATOR'S OFFICE

116

a cubbyhole behind the hotel clerk's desk in the lobby. At the switchboard is Pete, and above him tacked on the wall is the sign:

SMILE

4-2-4...?  
Pete (into phone)  
(he looks up)

116  
CONT'D  
(2)

CAMERA PULLS BACK revealing Smith standing  
beside him. The two men exchange a nod.

Pete (into phone)  
Lines're busy.  
(he clicks off the instrument)

INT. DOC'S LAB

117

Macreeedy slowly puts down the phone. Doc  
sips his milk, all the while staring queasily  
over the glass at Macreeedy. He puts it down,  
his gaze still fixed on the stranger...

Doc (sing-song)  
I know -- don't tell me -- lines all busy. They'll be  
busy all day.

Macreeedy (after a beat,  
grimacing)  
Don't look at me like that.

Doc  
Like what?

Macreeedy  
Like I'm a potential customer.

Doc  
Everybody is-- and I get 'em coming and going.

He goes to a topographic map hanging on the wall --  
a large, impressive map -- faded, fly-blown and  
divided into sections.

Doc (gesturing toward it).  
First I sell 'em a piece of land. Think they farm it?  
Nope. They dig for gold.

He moves to photograph beside the map on the  
wall -- a large, impressive photograph of a  
placer mine in operation.

Doc  
They rip off the top soil of ten winding hills. They  
sprint in here, fog-heaved with excitement, lugging  
nuggets, big and bright and shiny.

He moves to his desk, picks up a glistening blob  
of stone, resting next to an assayer's scales,  
and examines it...

Doc (rhetorically)

Is it gold?

117  
CONT  
(1)

He bangs the rock down next to the scales.

Doc

It is not! Do they quit? They do not!

He moves to a third illustration --a colored reproduction, large and impressive-- of acres upon green acres of produce in bloom; the kind of picture Southern Pacific places above its calendars.

Doc (with theatrical gesture  
toward reproduction)

Then they decide to farm. Farm! In country so dry you have to prime a man before he can spit, and before you can say "Fat Sam" they're stalled, stranded and starving. They get weevil-brained and buttsprung...

He moves to the coffins piled in a corner and runs his hand down the smooth pine sides with loving tenderness.

Doc (simply)

So I bury 'em.

(a beat, as he rejoins Macreedy in  
the center of the room)

But why should I bore you with my triumphs?

Macreedy

Yeah. I've got a problem of my own.

Doc nods; he points vaguely toward the street...

Doc (like an old testament  
prophet)

They're going to kill you with no hard feelings.

Macreedy (nastily)

And you'll just sit on your hands and let them.

Doc

Don't get waspish with me, young feller.

Macreedy

Sorry.

Doc

I feel for you, but I'm consumed with apathy. Why should I mix in?

Macreedy

To save a life.

Doc

117  
CONT'D  
(1a)

I got enough trouble saving my own.  
(he refills his glass from a milk bottle  
on the desk)

I try to live right and drink my orange juice every  
day. But mostly I try to mind my own business.  
Which is something I'd advise you to do.

Macreeedy  
It's a little late for that...

117  
CONTIN  
(2)

Doc  
You can still get out of town. And you'd better  
get out like a whisper.

Macreeedy  
How can I?

Doc (taking a key ring from  
his pocket)  
I got sort of a limousine at your disposal.

Macreeedy  
Where is it?

Doc (tossing him the key)  
Out back.

Macreeedy snares the key and walks out. Doc  
gets up to follow him.

EXT. REAR OF DOC'S OFFICE

118

An old-fashioned hearse, with plate glass sides,  
and elaborate lead candelabra -- Doc's "limou-  
sine" -- is parked a few steps from the door.  
Macreeedy climbs in behind the wheel as Doc comes  
out and stands on the small back porch.

Macreeedy turns on the ignition switch. His  
foot kicks over the starter, but the spark  
doesn't catch. He tries again, then again.  
He pauses, frowns, as Doc comes down from the  
porch and joins him.

Macreeedy (concentrating on the  
dashboard)  
Won't start.

Doc (nervously, to Macreeedy)  
Something wrong?

Macreeedy  
Just won't start...

Again he presses the ignition switch. Nothing.  
And suddenly, in b.g., the great bulk of Hector  
David looms up, leaning against the porch pillar  
at the corner of the alleyway. His expression  
is almost dreamy. For a moment he stands there  
while Macreeedy toys with the ignition and the  
sick engine wheezes and grinds. Then he ambles  
up to the hearse...

Bad Day at Black Rock  
Chgs. 7-14-54

P. 521

Hector (gratuitously)  
Could be the wirin'. Why don't you look under  
the hood?

118  
CONT'D  
(2)



Macreeedy

For that I thank you.

(pause)

How much time you think I've got before...?

Doc

They'll wait at least till dark.

(angrily)

They'd be afraid to see each other's faces.

Macreeedy (slapping Doc's

shoulder lightly)

Well, so long, Doc. I can't say it's been  
charming but....

Doc

Where are you going?

Macreeedy

I don't know. But I'm going on foot.

Doc

That's no good. You stray ten yards off Main  
Street, and you'll be stone, cold dead.

(offers Macreeedy a cigarette)

That's the situation, in a nut.

Macreeedy takes the cigarette, lighting a  
match with one hand. He puts the fire to  
Doc's smoke and then lights his own. He  
inhales, exhales, thinking. Finally.....

Macreeedy gets out of the car. Hector has already opened the hood... Doc peers nervously over his shoulder. As they study the engine, Hector's horsey face appears behind them. He gestures toward the engine.

118  
CONT'D  
(3)

INSERT - THE ENGINE

118X1

Focal point: a hopeless snarl of ignition wires.

BACK TO SCENE

118X2

Hector

It's the wirin', like I said. Now wasn't that a good guess?

Slowly he takes off his wrist watch and puts it in his pants pocket.

Macreeedy (quietly)

It can be fixed.

Ignoring Hector, he bends over the engine, controlling his obvious awareness that Hector has fouled up the ignition.

Hector

Easy. Unless, of course, this here wire...  
(reaching inside the hood, pointing)  
...got broke or something.

Doc (suddenly, heatedly,  
turning on Hector)

Do the nice little things, like keep your big fat nose out of my business.

Hector's eyes go hard. He reaches out suddenly, one great hand closing over the distributor cap. He yanks, ripping the feed wires out of their sockets.

Hector (triumphantly, holding  
up the wires)

Yep. It's the wirin'....

Still gripping the wires, he walks off. Doc simmers down. He turns to face Macreeedy, who hasn't moved. Now Macreeedy slowly lowers the hood of the car.

Doc (softly, after a beat)

I'm sorry, son. You got to admit, I tried.

Macreeedy (as if to himself)  
Maybe.....

118X2  
CONT'D  
(3)

Doc  
Maybe what?

Macreeedy  
If I can't get out of town, maybe I can get the  
state cops in.

Doc (irritably)  
You tried the phone, didn't you? You know what  
happened, don't you?

Macreeedy  
There's another way. I'll be seeing you, Doc.

He walks off. Doc looks after him grimly.

Doc (calling)  
I hope you'll be seeing me.

QUICK DISSOLVE;

INT. TELEGRAPH AGENT'S OFFICE

119

Macreeedy stands at the high counter, writing  
on a Postal Telegraph blank. Behind the  
counter, watching him nervously, is Hastings.  
At the agent's elbow is a big pitcher with  
dew on the glass. It holds a pale liquid and  
a chunk of ice. His eyes on Macreeedy, Hastings  
refills a glass tumbler. He takes a gulp as  
Macreeedy puts down the pencil and pushes the  
message toward him. Now Hastings puts down his  
glass, picks up the form and scans it hurriedly.  
He looks at Macreeedy, eyes glazed with anxiety...

Hastings  
You notifyin' the state po-lice?

Macreeedy (putting a bill on  
the counter)  
That's what it says.

Hastings again refills his glass, slopping the  
liquid over on the counter. He picks up the  
glass, hesitates, offers it awkwardly to Mac-  
reeedy.

Hastings (plaintively)  
Lemonade?

Macreeedy shakes his head. No.

119  
CONT'D  
(2)

Hastings (mopping his forehead)  
It's hot as Billy-be-durned.

He drinks, puts down the glass. Macreeedy pushes the bill across the counter toward him. Hastings picks it up gingerly then pauses....

Hastings  
Don't you like lemonade?

Macreeedy  
I never thought much about it.

Hastings  
It don't have the muzzle velocity of some other drinks drunk around here, but it's good for what ails you.

Macreeedy (after a beat)  
What ails you, Mr. Hastings?

Hastings  
Me....?

Macreeedy  
Why are you so upset about...  
(points)  
...this wire?

Hastings  
Me....?

Macreeedy  
Are you afraid, Mr. Hastings?

Hastings  
Me....?  
(a beat, then softly)

I guess I am.  
(awkwardly he puts Macreeedy's bill back on the counter)

But what's the use talkin'....?  
(with grudging respect)

You don't know what it's like, being scared.

Macreeedy (not unsympathetically)  
You want me to describe the symptoms? Right this minute I'm scared half to death.

Hastings (simply)  
You should be.

Macreeedy  
Yeah. But not of the state police.

Hastings (stonily)

119  
CONT'D  
(3)

Neither am I.....

Macreeedy

Then what are you afraid of? The grave at Adobe Flat? A grave nobody marked, nobody knows anything about.

Hastings

That ain't it, either.

Macreeedy

Is it Smith?

(no answer)

Is it?!

Hastings (squirming)

Look, Mr. Macreeedy. I'm just a good neighbor...

Macreeedy

To Smith you are. How about to Komako?

Hastings (meeting Macreeedy's eyes)

I never seen Komako in my life. Honest.

Macreeedy (again pushes the bill toward Hastings)

Then send that wire, and bring me the answer. You'll do that, won't you?

Hastings (pauses, then worriedly picking up the bill)

Yes, sir.

Macreeedy turns and walks out. Hastings stands sweating, staring hard at the message in his hand as....

QUICK DISSOLVE:

120 OUT

INT. SAM'S BAR & GRILL

121

A few loafers are at the bar, draped bonelessly on high stools. There is the usual array of bottles and glasses aligned before a cracked, discolored mirror. In the corner is a jukebox. Along the opposite wall is a line of low stools facing a counter covered with oil-cloth thumb-tacked in place. Behind it is a greasy hot plate and a couple of soiled displays -- breakfast food, soft drinks, etc. At the grill counter is Sam, cleaning his fingernails with a toothpick. At the bar, engaged in a worrisome conversation, are four loafers,

FRANKLIN KROOL, WALT MURTRY, RON BENTHAM and  
STERLING LENARD.

121  
CONT'D  
(2)

Krool  
I tell you, I won't have anything to do with it.

Murtry (nodding emphatically)  
Live and let live, that's what I say.

Bentham (frowning)  
I don't know. I just don't know.

Lenard (to Bentham)  
You gonna brood about it? Or you want another  
beer?

Bentham  
A beer, I guess. Only...

He looks up, and something makes him hesitate...

WHAT HE SEES -- EXT. BAR & GRILL - MACREEDY

121X1

stopping in front of the restaurant. On the  
window large, rough capital letters in water  
paint proclaim:

SAM'S SANITARY BAR & GRILL

Macreeedy pauses, shrugs and then enters,

INT. BAR & GRILL

121X2

Sam is still working on his finger nails. He  
evidences little interest in the stranger, but  
at the bar in b.g. the loafers stiffen. Mac-  
reeedy takes a stool in front of Sam,

Sam  
What'll you have?

Macreeedy  
What have you got?

Sam  
Chili wit' beans.

Macreeedy  
Anything else?

Sam  
Chili wit'out beans..

Macreeedy winces.

Sam  
You don't like the taste, that's what they  
make ketchup for.

Macreeedy  
In that case, I'll have it. And a cup of coffee.

The door of the Bar & Grill opens. Smith  
and Coley enter. They walk to Macreeedy,  
stopping just a few feet behind him.

Coley (to Macreeedy, with  
menacing friendliness)  
You still around? I thought you didn't like this  
place.

Macreeedy (pleasantly)  
Going to, or coming from?

Coley  
Staying put.

Macreeedy

No comment.

12172  
CONT'D  
(3)

He turns again as Sam plops an unseasonable  
mess of chili in front of him.

Coley (to Smith, gesturing a  
thumb toward Macreeedy)

No comment, he says. No comment, and all the time  
he's got my chair.

Macreeedy smiles tiredly. He half turns toward  
Coley.

Macreeedy

I always seem to be taking somebody's place around  
here.

He gets up, with his chili, and sits down  
three stools away. Coley straddles the stool  
Macreeedy has vacated. He squirms on it, his  
movements exaggerated. Now he spins to face  
Smith.

Coley

This seat ain't comfortable.

Macreeedy

I was afraid of that.

Coley

I think I'd like the seat you're on.

Smith (to Macreeedy, mildly)

He's as changeable as a prairie fire.

Macreeedy (to Coley)

Suppose you tell me where to sit.

Coley opens his mouth but, realizing he has  
been outmaneuvered, closes it again. The  
loafers in b.g. are silent, watching. Sam,  
seemingly oblivious to Coley's pressure on  
Macreeedy, places a bottle of ketchup in front  
of the stranger. Coley gets up slowly and  
walks stiff-legged to Macreeedy. He takes the  
bottle of ketchup and, without removing the  
cap, upends it over Macreeedy's plate. The  
cap is drowned in a deluge of ketchup which  
overflows the plate and runs onto the counter.

Coley (to Macreeedy)

I hope that ain't too much.

Macreeedy (to Smith, gesturing  
toward Coley)

Your friend's a very argumentative fellow.



Smith (nodding)  
Sort of unpredictable, too. Got a temper like a rattlesnake.

121X2  
CONT'D  
(4)

Coley  
That's me all over. I'm half hoss, half alligator. Mess with me, I'll kick a lung outta you. What do you think of that?

Macreeedy  
No comment.

Coley  
Talking to you is like pulling teeth. You wear me out.

(loudly, after a beat)  
You're a yellow-bellied Jap lover. Am I right or wrong?

Macreeedy  
You're not only wrong -- you're wrong at the top of your voice.

Coley  
You don't like my voice?

Macreeedy (again turning to Smith)  
I think your friend's trying to start something.

Smith  
Now why-ever would he want to do that?

Macreeedy  
I don't know. Maybe he figures, needle me enough and I'll crack. Maybe I'll even fight back. Then he or Hector -- your other ape -- would beat me to death and cop a plea of self-defense.

Smith  
I don't think that'll be necessary. You're so scared now you'll probably drown in your own sweat.

Coley  
Before that happens, couldn't I pick a fight with you if I tied one hand behind me...?

Macreeedy rises to go out. As he passes Coley, Coley takes his limp left arm and spins him slowly but firmly around. The two men face each other.

Coley  
If I tied both hands...?

Macreeedy shakes free of Coley's grasp. Coley lunges. His big right fist streaks toward Macreeedy's face. Macreeedy ducks, weaving with the punch. He grabs Coley's belt, twisting Coley's body. The momentum of the swing throws Coley off balance. As he goes past Macreeedy, the stranger tugs at his belt, twisting him to one side. He plants his left foot firmly on the toes of Coley's left boot, for a split second anchoring Coley in place. He chops the under side of his open hand in a short, vicious arc that lands solidly under Coley's ear. With the same motion, he brings the heel of his hand hard against and slightly under the tip of Coley's nose. The cartilage shatters. Blood spills down his face. Following through, Macreeedy's elbow smashes beneath Coley's cheekbone. Macreeedy's arm goes past the astonished, wind-burned face, finding Coley's right wrist. He jerks the wrist out and backward. It snaps. Coley whimpers, his face twisted in pain and perplexity. His body lolls forward. Macreeedy steps back. He raises his right shoulder a few inches. His bent right arm drives up like a piston attached to the shoulder's lift. Fist and arm seem all one rigid piece with only the limber shoulder giving them motion. The fist strikes Coley's face, covering for a moment one side of his chin and a corner of his mouth between cheekbone and jawbone. Coley shuts his eyes and falls unconscious.

121X2  
CONT'D  
(5)

Smith, a puzzled expression on his face, watches Coley fall. He takes half a step toward him. Macreeedy looks at Smith. Smith stops. Macreeedy's face is wooden, with a trace of sullenness around the hard lines of his mouth. Working methodically, Macreeedy frisks Coley. He takes from a pocket a long, ugly knife. He snaps the spring and the four-inch blade leaps into place. He looks at the knife in his hand and then at Smith. He smiles gently, even dreamily.

Macreeedy (to Smith)

Wouldn't it be easier if you just waited till I turned my back?

(looking toward the loafers at the bar,  
then back at Smith)

Or are there too many witnesses present?

Macreeedy walks slowly toward him, holding the knife. They are only three feet apart. Smith's hand goes to a pocket, closes inside over the outline of a pistol. Sam glances

from Macreeedy to Smith to the unconscious Coley. He sidles toward the door and runs out fast. (NOTE: From this point to end of scene INTERCUT from Macreeedy and Smith to exploit the reactions of the loafers at the bar.)

121X2  
CONT'  
(6)

Smith (with effortless ferocity)  
You're still in trouble.

Macreeedy  
So are you.  
(Smith snorts)  
Whatever happens -- you're lost.

Smith  
You got things a bit twisted...

Macreeedy  
You killed Komako. Sooner or later you'll go up for it. Not because you killed him -- in this town you probably could have gotten away with it -- but because you didn't even have the guts to do it alone. You put your trust in guys like him...  
(gesturing toward the unconscious Coley)  
...and Hector -- they're not the most dependable of God's creatures. Sooner or later they'll get the idea you're playing them for saps. What'll you do then -- peel them off, one by one? And in the meantime if any one of them breaks, you'll go down hard. Because they got something on you. Something to use when things get tough.

With a quick motion, he tosses the knife to Smith. Smith catches it.

Macreeedy  
And they're getting tougher every minute.

He walks past Smith and goes out the door. Self-consciously holding the knife, Smith turns to face the loafers at the bar. They say nothing; they stare at him, through him, like a panel of ghouls. The door opens, admitting Sam and Doc, who carries his little black medical bag. Doc looks at Coley.

Doc (softly, full of awe)  
Man...man-oh-man.

He goes to Coley, bending down over him. Smith has remained motionless as a monument. Now he doubles shut the knife in his hand. He pockets it, and without even glancing at Coley, turns quickly and goes out.

QUICK DISSOLVE:

## INT. HOTEL LOBBY

122

Doc sits deep in the battered upholstery of one of the chairs. He stares fiercely across the room at Smith who is on the couch, reading a neatly folded newspaper. Behind him at the clerk's desk, Pete is fitfully involved in a game of solitaire. At the foot of the stairs Hector is pouring change into a slot machine. It whines, grinds, and clicks with rhythmic monotony, but it never seems to pay off. In the chair nearest Doc is Tim, with one of his boots off. He works hard and with some concentration, removing the other. Then he places them neatly at the foot of his chair. He wiggles his toes -- watching them with some interest.

The wheeze and whir of the slot machine stops. The sudden silence turns the eyes of the men toward Hector and the one-arm bandit. They follow his gaze up the steps.

## STAIRWAY - MACREEDY

123

walks down, carrying his suitcase. He goes to Pete at the clerk's desk.

Macreeedy

Anything for me?

Pete

Nothing.

Macreeedy

Any message -- a telegram?

Pete (returning to his cards)

Nothing.

As Macreeedy turns from the desk, Doc joins him.

Doc (to Macreeedy, shrilly,  
gruffly)

In case you're interested, Coley'll live.

(glaring at Smith and Hector)

I'm truly sorry to say.

Smith coolly continues to read his paper. It is Hector who turns toward Doc...

Hector (to Doc, jerking a fat

hand toward Macreeedy)

Your friend's pretty tough.

Doc  
Yeah. He's wicked. He defends himself when he's  
attacked.

123  
CONT'D  
(2)

Macreeedy ignores the exchange of words. He  
walks across the frayed carpet to the nearest  
chair and drops into it. Doc, who has follow-  
ed him, stands looking down at Macreeedy for  
a long moment. Then...

Doc (with some irritation)  
Well...? You going to just sit here and let time  
run out?

Macreeedy  
I'm waiting for a wire. From the state cops.

Doc  
You sent it through Hastings?  
(an audible sigh)  
Just don't expect an answer, if that's the way you  
sent it.

Macreeedy (looking toward the  
door)  
No?  
(he rises)

Doc follows his gaze as Hastings enters the  
lobby and looks around. He sees Macreeedy  
coming toward him. He walks rigidly in an  
arc past Macreeedy to Smith. He holds out a  
Postal Telegraph form. Smith puts down his  
paper and takes it. Macreeedy, followed by  
Doc, goes over to Smith. Tim in his stock-  
inged feet joins them.

Smith scans the message. He looks up to meet  
Macreeedy's gaze. Smith rises. Hector swaggers  
over from the slot machine. Hastings slips  
around the back of the couch, protected by the  
barricade of Hector's great body.

Macreeedy (evenly, to Smith)  
I think that's for me.  
(he takes the message from Smith's hand  
and quickly glances at it. Looking up  
at Hastings)  
Where's the answer?

Hastings is silent. A brittle expression of be-  
musement crosses Smith's features.

Smith  
You expect an answer -- to a wire that's never sent?

Macreeedy's mouth compresses in a harsh grin.

123  
CONT'D  
(3)

Smith

What's so funny?

Macreeedy

Nothing. Just a thought --  
(his eyes turn to Hastings. Hastings  
wilts)  
-- a thought dazzling in its purity...

Macreeedy takes a step toward Hastings. The  
telegraph agent bounces away.

Macreeedy (slowly)

You're in a jam, Hastings. You gave my telegram  
to Smith.

Doc (excitedly)

You warty wretch! That's a federal offense!

Macreeedy (to Smith)

You're in deep, too.  
(grins hard)  
Like I said, it's getting tougher and tougher.  
(to Tim)  
Sheriff, you'd better do something about this.

Tim hesitates, blinking his eyes worriedly,  
shifting from one stockinged foot to the  
other. Smith watches him insolently as he  
takes the message from Macreeedy and gestures  
with it vaguely...

Tim (to Smith)

I reckon that's right, Mr. Smith...

Hector

Don't be a jerk, Tim.

Tim (to Smith, seriously)

Divulging information -- there's a law...

Smith

Tim, you're pathetic.

Tim (doggedly)

Could be. But I'm still Sheriff.

Smith

That's the point. You're not Sheriff any more.  
You just lost a job, you're so pathetic.

He reaches out, clawing the badge from Tim's chest. He jabs it on Hector's vest.

123  
CONT'D  
(4)

Smith (to Hector)

All right, Sheriff. Take over.

Doc

You can't do that!

Smith

Can't I? I put him in office. Now I take him out.

Hector moves his elephantine bulk within inches of Macreeedy...

Hector

Now. You want to register a complaint?

Macreeedy doesn't answer. Hector takes the message from Tim's limp hand and tears it into little pieces.

Hector

To register a complaint, boy, you've got to have evidence. You got evidence?

Macreeedy doesn't answer.

Hector

You got a big mouth, boy, makin' accusations, disturbin' the peace. There's laws in this county protectin' innocent folks from big mouths. Why, I'd just hate to...

Smith (interrupting)

Hector...

(wearily)

Come on, Hector.

He walks out, the new Sheriff strutting beside him, with Hastings in their wake. For a moment Macreeedy, Doc and Tim stand in the center of the lobby. Pete eyes them non-committally and goes back to his solitaire. He glances up now and then, moving the cards with a purposeful sort of slowness, as of a more natural swiftness restrained by his pre-occupation with the three men in the lobby.

Macreeedy is deep in thought. Abstractedly he tugs at his collar and then repeats the ritual of lighting a cigarette. Tim's shoulders are slumped. Humiliation has corroded him, flesh and soul. Even Doc is momentarily subdued; he too, feels degraded, unclean. Macreeedy looks from one to the other of the good, ineffectual companions that circumstance has so haphazardly tossed his way. He takes a few

steps to his suitcase, Doc and Tim trailing him; Doc, for want of something better to do; Tim, out of his deep, inexpressible need for support. Macreeedy takes an untapped bottle of whiskey from his bag. He thumbs the cork loose and holds the bottle out to Tim. Tim takes a drink.

123  
CONT'D  
(5)

The light on the clerk's desk goes on, and we are aware that day has gone and that night is falling. The pressing, fierce light has drained from the lobby, leaving a shadowy, silvery dreariness. The shadows have lengthened and the silver has tarnished with the darkness.

Doc (hopefully)

It's all right, Tim. We're not licked yet.

Tim (numbly)

Ain't we? I am.

Doc

There comes a time, Tim, when a man's just got to do something.

Tim

Not me. I'm useless, and I know it.

Doc (imploring)

No man is useless, if he's got a friend...

Pete comes out from behind the desk, walking from one lamp in the lobby to another, turning them on.

Doc

I'm your friend, Tim.

Tim

Then let me alone.

He hands Doc the whiskey bottle.

Doc (jabbing at Macreeedy with  
a thumb)

He's going to need you before the night is over.

He downs a snort, then looks at Pete, who approaches them.

Doc (contemptuously)

And all the useful men are on the other side.

As Pete turns on the lamp behind Doc, he reacts ever so slightly to Doc's words. His almost imperceptible grimace is not lost on



Macreeedy. Macreeedy watches the young man as he continues to light the lamps....

123  
CONT'D  
(6)

Tim (angrily)  
Lemme alone, I tell ya!

Doc slams the whiskey bottle down on a nearby table.

Doc  
I can't let you alone! I can't let myself alone!  
Don't you understand that?  
(he turns from Tim to Pete, who is unable to shake his gaze. Then, sadly, fiercely)  
Four years ago something terrible happened here. We did nothing about it. Nothing. The whole town fell into a sort of settled melancholy, and the people in it closed their eyes and held their tongues and failed the test with a whimper.

Self-consciously Pete has backed off until now he leans against the outside of the clerk's desk. But he still can't shut his ears to what Doc is saying...

Doc  
Now something terrible is going to happen again, and in a way we're lucky because we've been given a second chance. And this time I won't close my eyes, I won't hold my tongue, and if I'm needed I won't fail.

(almost harshly, again facing Tim)  
And neither will you!

Tim sighs, running a thick hand over his forehead...

Tim  
I got such a headache, I'm bewildered. I hurt all over.

Macreeedy  
I know --  
(unconsciously his right arm strays to massage the paralyzed left)  
-- pain is bewildering. I came here bewildered, full of self-pity, afraid to fight back.  
(gesturing with his hand to Pete)  
And then your friend Smith tried to kill me.  
(the muscles around Pete's mouth tighten)  
Funny, how a man clings to the earth when he feels there's a chance he may never see it again.

Doc  
There's a difference between clinging to the earth...  
(eyeing Tim almost contemptuously)  
...and crawling on it. You going to stand by and  
watch forever?

123  
CONT'D  
(7)

Tim (flatly)  
I ain't gonna watch, and I ain't gonna get into it,  
either.

There is a moment of crashing silence. Then...

Tim  
I'm gettin' out. I'm sorry, Mr. Macreedy.

Slowly he lumbers out of the lobby. Doc  
watches him go. Again the benumbing silence,  
cut finally, unexpectedly by...

Pete (to Doc)  
You'd be smart to get out, too.

Doc (angrily turning to Pete)  
There's too many smart guys around here. I'm glad  
I'm a dummy.

Pete  
You're a troublesome dummy. You're liable to end  
up on your own slab...

Doc (heatedly)  
I expect to be in a lot more trouble before I die...

Pete  
Go home, Doc.  
(he jerks his head toward Macreedy, and  
with mock bravado...)  
He's all washed up.

Macreedy (grinning harshly at  
him)  
You think so?

His right hand closes over the neck of the  
whiskey bottle on the end table. Abstractedly  
fingering it, he walks with tense, deliberate  
steps toward Pete at the desk.

Macreedy  
I was washed up when I got off that train...

He continues to advance inexorably toward Pete.

Pete (flatly)  
You shouldn'of got off.

Macreeedy  
Had to. I had one last duty to perform before I  
resigned from the human race.

123  
CONT'L  
(8)

Doc (quizzically)  
I thought you were going to Los Angeles, that hot-  
bed of pomp and vanity. Is that resigning from  
the human race?

Macreeedy (shrugging)  
L.A.'s a good jumping off place -- for the Islands,  
for Mexico, Central America.

Doc  
Why?

Macreeedy (again shrugs)  
I don't know. I was looking for a place to get  
lost, I guess.

Doc  
Why?

Macreeedy (slapping his paralyzed  
arm with the whisky bottle)  
Because of this. I thought I'd never be able to  
function again.

(turning to Pete)  
Thanks to your friend Smith, I found I was wrong.

He is now within a couple of yards of Pete,

Pete (drily)  
Sure. You're a man of action.

Macreeedy (slowly)  
I know your problem.  
(with mounting vigor)  
You'd like me to die quickly, without wasting too  
much of your time...

(Pete opens his mouth to say something,  
but Macreeedy presses on)  
...or silently, without making you feel too un-  
comfortable...or thankfully, without making your  
memories of the occasion too unpleasant.

For a moment Pete stares at Macreeedy, terribly  
disturbed by the incisiveness of Macreeedy's  
analysis. Then.....

Pete (bitterly)  
My memories are so pleasant as it is....

In sudden frustration, Pete grabs the deck of  
cards on the clerk's desk and slams them down  
hard. They scatter. He turns, stares blankly

~~at Macreeedy, who is now standing between him and Macreeedy~~

Macreeedy (quietly pressing his  
advantage)  
What happened, Pete?

Pete doesn't answer.

Doc  
Are you going to tell him -- or you want me to?  
(beat)

Smith owns Adobe Flat. He leased it to Komako --  
thought he had cheated him, thought Komako could  
never even run stock without water. There was  
never any water on Adobe Flat. Komako dug a well,  
by hand. He must have went down one hundred and  
fifty feet.

Pete  
He got water, plenty. Smith was pretty sore. He  
didn't like Japs anyway.

Doc  
That's an understatement.

Pete  
The day after Pearl Harbor, Smith went to Sand City.

Macreeedy (interrupting)  
I know. To enlist. He was turned down.

Pete  
He was sore when he got back. About ten o'clock  
he started drinking.

Macreeedy  
Ten o'clock in the morning.

Pete  
Yeah. Hector joined him, and Coley. Then Sam,  
and about nine p.m. -- me. We were all drunk --  
patriotic drunk. We went out to Komako's for a  
little fun, I guess - scare him a little.

Macreeedy  
Did you know him?

Pete  
We'd seen him around some, but none of us knew him.  
When he heard us coming, he locked the door. Smith  
started a fire. The Jap came running out. His  
clothes were burning. Smith shot him. I didn't  
even know Smith had a gun.

Macreeedy  
Then you all got scared, buried him, kept quiet.

Pete nods helplessly, bowing his head.  
Macreeedy sighs, looks down at the bottle in  
his hand, slowly puts it on the table...

Macreeedy (softly)

Did Komako have any family besides his son Joe?

123  
CONT'D  
(10)

Doc (puzzled)

His son...? Nobody around here knew he had a son.

Macreeedy

He had one. But he's dead, too. He's buried in Italy.

Doc

What are you doing here, Mr. Macreeedy?

Macreeedy

Joe Komako died in Italy, saving my life. They gave him a medal. I came here to give it to his father.

Silence. Doc, realizing the enormity of Macreeedy's admission, frowns, rubs a hand across his tired eyes. Pete looks at Macreeedy for a long, shocked moment. He shivers.

Pete (awfully)

God forgive me...

He takes the bottle from the table and shakily pours a shot glass of liquor. As he raises it to his mouth...

Macreeedy (to Pete, harshly

guttural)

It'll take a lot of whiskey to wash out your guts...

Pete is motionless, holding the glass inches from his lips, hypnotized by Macreeedy's voice, as hard and as cold as his eyes...

Macreeedy

...And it will never help -- not even a barrell full washes away murder!

Macreeedy's hand shoots out, in a short, inexorable arc, smashing his palm across the shot glass. The whiskey bursts in a spray, the glass flies halfway across the room, shattering as it lands against something solid. Pete is stunned, Doc perplexed, at Macreeedy's violence. They stare at him...

Macreeedy's eyes are murky. The creases between the brows over his nose are deep. His nostrils move in and out with his breathing. Pete and Doc regard him with growing uneasiness. Rage comes into Macreeedy's face, turning it a painful red.

Macreeedy

But maybe I'm wrong. Go on -- drink.  
(scornfully)

What else is left for you?!  
(mounting anger)

You're as dead as Komako, only you don't know it!  
(roaring)

You also don't know that it's not enough to feel  
guilty. It's not enough to confess. It's not  
enough to say, "Forgive me, I've done wrong."

Doc

Take it easy, Macreeedy. Sit down.

Macreeedy (turning on him)

Sit down?! Or would you rather have me kneel, to  
beg his pardon for raising a touchy subject?

Pete squirms under Macreeedy's relentless  
attack.

Pete (shaking his head)

You don't have to remind me. I've never forgotten...

Macreeedy.

Well, that's mighty noble of you. You feel  
ashamed -- that's noble, too.

(in mounting crescendo)

And four years from now you'll probably be sitting  
here telling somebody else you haven't forgotten  
me. That's progress -- you'll still be ashamed but  
I'll be dead.

Macreeedy grabs the bottle, shoving it across  
the table toward Pete.

Macreeedy

Go on, have your drink.

(with exorbitant scorn)

You need it.

Pete pushes the bottle aside, too ravaged by  
Macreeedy's words and his own thoughts to drink.  
He shakes his head grimly and then, with  
sudden decision, goes to the switchboard and  
plugs in a line.

Doc (leaning over counter,

staring at him)

What are you doing?

Pete (into phone, ignoring

Doc)

Hello, Liz. Now listen... I...I'm getting Macreeedy  
out of town...

Bad Day at Black Rock  
Chgs. 7-21-54

P.71B

ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY AND DOC

124

as they exchange a glance. Doc takes a long, deep breath of relief. Macreedy frowns thoughtfully. He strains to listen to Liz, but all he (and we) can hear is the staccato jumble of her words over the wire.

WIDER ANGLE - FAVORING PETE

125

He cuts Liz short...

Pete (into phone)

I don't care about Smith! Let him try to kill me -- I might as well be dead as...

Again Liz's voice incoherent over the phone, and again...

Pete (into phone, interrupting)

Liz, Liz... There's not much of me left any more, but however little it is I won't waste it!

(again Liz's voice briefly; then...)

I'm telling you because we need your help.

(again Liz's voice)

...No matter about the past -- you've got to do this! You'd be saving two lives, Liz. Macreeedy's, and mine.

(again Liz answers and...)

All right. Yeah...I've told him everything.

Slowly he replaces the phone on the switchboard. He comes around from behind the desk, joining Macreeedy and Doc.

Pete (flatly)

She'll be here in five minutes.

Macreeedy

Thanks, Pete. Thanks very much.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - PETE, HECTOR AND DOC -  
NIGHT

125X1

Pete and Doc are nervously alert, drained of energy, waiting. Hector is downright bored. He toys with his pistol, squinting at it, twirling the barrel. Finding neither interest nor pleasure in the piece, he jams it back in his holster and strolls with exaggerated surety out on the porch.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

125X2

The congregation of loafers look up as Hector emerges. Imbued with his own bullying importance, he draws the pistol, maneuvers an extravagant pinwheel and a few other gaudy tricks. Then he sighs as boredom again takes over. He walks down the steps to catch a bit of air.



INT. LOBBY - DOC AND PETE

125X3

The disappearance of Hector (o.s.) down the street galvanizes them into action. They hurry out of the lobby toward the back of the hotel.

EXT. ALLEY - BEHIND HOTEL - NIGHT

126

Vague in the pallid light escaping through a few back windows. The hotel's rear door is tightly shut. Around the far corner of the street (extreme b.g.) comes the gangling body of Hector David. He walks toward CAMERA. Perhaps twenty-five yards away he stops to rest against a fence like a leaning tower.

CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR

127

His hand goes to a pocket and comes out with a crumpled half pack of cigarettes. Suddenly the movement is arrested; something at the other end of the street captures his bleak attention.

WHAT HE SEES

128

A jeep, headlights off, slowly turns the corner, pulls up to the curb and parks.

BACK TO SCENE - HECTOR

129

pockets his cigarettes and starts slowly for the jeep, a quizzical frown on his horsy face. He approaches the back door of the hotel, oblivious to it as he continues toward the jeep.

INT. REAR HALLWAY OF HOTEL - NIGHT

130

At the far end b.g., toward the lobby, a single unshaded light bulb burns dully. A slight figure stands in f.g. To one side is a narrow U-shaped alcove blanketed in heavy shadows. The features of the man in the hall and the slim lines of his body blend vaguely in the darkness. With enormous care, he turns a knob and opens the door leading to the alley

behind the hotel. Light thrown by the back windows reveals that the figure is Pete. The same pallid light from the alley, glancing across the alcove, momentarily illuminates it. Glued as close to the recessed wall as is humanly possible is Doc. He is partially shielded by one of those hotel hose wheels around which an old fire hose is wound. The heavy brass nozzle of the hose hangs from the end.

130  
CONT'D  
(2)

Doc grips a twelve-inch length of lead pipe. Pete swallows nervously and peers outside, first to the right, then to the left. His eyes glaze with fear, and his jaw tightens with tension.

EXT. ALLEY - ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING PETE

131

as he stares at Hector walking toward the jeep.

Pete (controlling his jangled  
nerves)

Hector!

Hector stops, turns to face Pete. He hesitates, then...

Hector

Hmmm?

Then, with a final glance at the jeep, Hector lumbers to Pete, who disappears inside the hallway.

INT. REAR HALLWAY

132

as Hector enters and stops. Pete quickly closes the door behind him and walks toward the lobby, attempting to draw Hector toward the black alcove center screen b.g. But Hector is not to be sucked in. He glares at Pete, waiting. (NOTE: The following dialogue is delivered sotto voce.)

Hector

What you want?

Pete

He's still in his room. Macreeedy, I mean.

Hector

So...? You want me to tuck him in?

Pete

I thought maybe you wanted to tell Smith.

132  
CONT'D  
(2)

Hector (explaining something  
he feels Pete already knows)

Smith said he'd be here at midnight. He don't  
want to be disturbed.

He jams a cigarette in his mouth. Pete  
watches him frantically as he searches his  
pockets for a match. He can't find one.

Hector

You got a match?

Pete

Come on. I got some in the lobby.

He starts to turn. Hector's pig eyes are  
slits of suspicion. Before Pete can move,  
Hector reaches out, hooking two heavy fingers  
inside a pocket of Pete's shirt. Slowly  
Hector's expression changes to one of insidi-  
ous cunning. His fingers come out of Pete's  
pocket, and between them is a paper book of  
matches.

Hector

I thought you didn't have a match.

Pete is unable to answer. He is scared to  
death.

INT. ALCOVE - DOC

132X1

sweating with frustration. Hector is six  
feet away, and armed -- too far away for Doc  
to risk an attack with his lead pipe. Doc  
looks around vaguely, wildly, for another  
weapon. A fraction of an inch from his nose  
is the hose wheel. For a split second he  
hesitates. Then slowly, with infinite care,  
he tightens the heavy brass nozzle and begins  
to unwind the hose.

INT. REAR HALLWAY

132X2

Now Hector is alert. He studies Pete's  
twitching face. Elaborately he tears a match  
from the pack and scratches it. It takes  
fire, cupped in the rampart of his big hands.  
It lights up the hall, and as Hector looks  
around he sees something through a mirror --  
over his shoulder and six feet away Doc

materializes out of the shadows of the alcove. As Hector whirls, going for his gun, Doc swings the hose with sudden deadly aim. It uncoils like a snake, and the brass nozzle crashes with a mighty thud across Hector's skull. Hector groans. He sinks unconscious to the floor. Doc stands there, paralyzed by his action. Pete tears toward the lobby.

132X2  
CONT'D  
(2)

INT. LOBBY

132X3

as Pete rushes in. He moves directly to the desk, leans over and presses the buzzer behind the desk three times. He turns and runs back toward the rear of the building.

INT. REAR STAIRS

132X4

as Macreeedy barrels down. He pauses briefly in the hall as he sees Doc still standing with the hose and the nozzle dangling like a pendulum from his hand. Their eyes lock briefly in understanding...

Macreeedy (with a half smile)  
I'll never forgive you, Doc...  
(he gestures toward Hector, out cold)  
...for depriving me of that pleasure.

He heads toward the alley.

EXT. ALLEY

133

as Macreeedy rushes out. He pauses, looking quickly right, then left. He sees a jeep parked at the curb far down the street. He runs toward it. The jeep, its headlights off, starts for him. He swings onto the moving vehicle, falling heavily into the seat beside Liz Brooks. He slumps there, breathing heavily as the jeep, with a grinding of gears, cuts through the night, picking up speed.

INT. REAR HALLWAY

133X1

as Pete joins Doc. Silently, motionlessly, the two men stare for a long moment at Hector -- particularly at the pistol lying beside him. Then they look at each other, and the same thought seems to flash in their minds....

QUICK DISSOLVE:

EXT. ROAD - MACREEDY AND LIZ

134

as they speed down the long empty ribbon of road. Liz drives hard. Macreedy turns in the bucket seat, looking back toward Black Rock.

Liz

Sorry I can't get more out of this heap.

Macreedy does not answer.

Liz (with a burst of irritation)

We could make better time with a dog team.

Macreedy (calmly)

You're doing the best you can.

(a beat)

Aren't you, Liz?

Liz

Don't expect too much from me.

Macreeedy (dryly)  
Don't worry, I won't.

134  
CONT'D  
(2)

Liz (quickly)  
I mean, people have always expected things from me. You know why? Because I'm pretty. Well, that's not enough.

MED. SHOT - JEEP

134X1

with Liz and Macreeedy as she cuts sharply into a crossroad. She drives skillfully over the knotty road which is little more than a trail. Her lovely features are distorted with her discontent and the ache for attention. After a moment she gives voice to her fantasy...

Liz (softly)  
Maybe I could have been something -- a model, or something.

(glancing at him)  
You don't believe that.

Macreeedy  
Yes I do.

Liz  
Well, I don't, really. I'm a dime a dozen.

Macreeedy  
That I don't believe.

Liz  
I'm too little and too late.

Macreeedy  
It's never too late.

Liz  
I lack the muscle.

Macreeedy (frowning)  
Why is muscle so important?

Liz (cynically)  
Oh, you're the brainy type.  
(harshly)

Did it take brains to rough up Coley? Whatever you did to Hector, you didn't do it with brains. How'd you get Peto to change his mind?

Macreeedy  
Not with muscle.

Liz

And not with brains, either. He's a pushover for a muscle man.

Macreeedy

I'm beginning' to think it runs in the family.  
(looking at her hard)

You think strength is in the width of a man's shoulders.

He does not catch the glance she darts him; his extreme awareness is anchored not to the girl at his side but to the terrain ahead.

Liz

I'd sure have liked to see you tangle with Reno Smith.

Macreeedy

He wasn't around when I left.... Maybe I will yet.

His eyes strain to sweep the country -- each boulder, each outcropping, each stunted tree. But substance and shadow are blurred and fuzzy in the dark night, black on black.

135 OUT

ANOTHER ANGLE - JEEP

136

with Macreeedy and Liz as it winds to the far end of the boulders on a trail that drops off into a flat basin. Solid forms loom up in the darkness; they are unrecognizable; yet Macreeedy senses some tense familiarity with the terrain.... He frowns. Suddenly Liz brakes the jeep -- so sharply Macreeedy lurches forward in the seat.

Macreeedy (alert, expectant)

What's this?

Liz (vamping nervously)

We need water...

(she turns off engine, pulling ignition key from its lock)

...radiator's overheating.

She moves away from Macreeedy to get out of the jeep. He reaches across quickly, gripping her arm. She turns to face him, disturbed by his hardness of jaw and eye...

Liz

Leggo! Leggo of me!

Suddenly they are hit by a blinding pair of headlights.

The beams cut jaggedly through the night, throwing into sharp immediate relief the lava rocks, the broken windmill, the gutted house, the litter-strewn, unmarked grave at Adobe Flat.

Liz throws away the ignition key. Macreeedy bails out of the jeep, still holding the girl.

CLOSE TWO SHOT - LIZ AND MACREEEDY

137

as they fall to the earth. Macreeedy pins her down. Then in quick succession, four emphatically loud SHOTS from a rifle squirt into the shale around them.

Macreeedy (harshly, through his teeth)  
You're stupid, Liz. You're a fool. If he finishes me, he's got to finish you.

He looks up blindly into the headlights glaring from the granitic high ground some 60 yards away. His grip on the girl's shoulder is like a steel trap. He pushes her down beside Komako's grave, hugging the side of the jeep as a SHOT rips the gravel at their feet. Pulling the girl with him, he takes cover in the slight concavity of the grave. The jeep is between them and the headlights -- between them and the source of the gunfire. Liz struggles to break away. Suddenly bullets kick up a storm around him. A bullet smashes into the flowers, exploding tiny cruel fragments of dirt into Macreeedy's face. He gasps in pain, releasing Liz. He rubs his eyes as if to convince himself that he is not blind. Liz breaks from the grave. Now, five yards from Macreeedy...

Liz (calling toward the headlights)  
Smitty! Smitty!

Smith's Voice (o.s.)  
I'm here, honey. Just head for the car.

Liz half turns, facing Macreeedy with a vicious smile...

Liz (an almost bantering voice)  
So long, Macreeedy.

She starts toward the headlights.



GO WITH LIZ.

137X1

She reaches the foot of the rocky ridge, with the two enormous eyes on top. She begins to climb, up...up...

Smith (o.s.)  
Just a few more steps, honey.

She is almost at the top; a vertically sheer rock about five feet high separates her from it. She looks up at Smith, towering over her at the edge of the precipice. He holds his rifle almost languorously.

Liz (breathlessly)  
Get him! Get him now!

Smith (easily)  
First things first, honey.

The girl is frightened by the menace in Smith's voice.

Liz (unsure, reaching out her hand)  
Help me up, Smitty.

Smith  
You were going to help me, Liz.  
(she looks at him quizzically)  
I still need your help.

Liz (confused)  
I did what you said...

Smith  
You two started out in a car. That's the way you'll end up. Over a cliff, burning.  
(she tries to interrupt him, but he goes on...)  
You can blame that on Macreeedy, too. He said I had too many witnesses.

Liz (dry whisper)  
But why me? Why start with me?

Smith  
I got to start with somebody.

He brings the rifle down, aiming almost casually at Liz. Her eyes go wide. She steps back, spins around, running crazily down the steep incline.

Liz (yelling wildly)  
Macreeedy! Macreeedy!

A SHOT rings out. She falls forward, rolling slowly down the embankment. She lies there. Blood trickles from the corner of her pretty mouth. A rattling noise rises from deep in her throat, and then subsides.

In the silence the outline of Reno Smith emerges. Holding his rifle at the ready, his silhouette illuminated sharply in the twin beams of light, he climbs down the side of the cliff. He looks toward the jeep and Macreedy, not once at the girl at his feet.

137X1  
CONT'D  
(2)

Liz (sadly, almost reproachfully)  
You shouldn't have done that...

Smith pays no attention to her. He advances inexorably with rifle held at his hip. He fires at Macreedy.

EXT. GRAVE

138

Macreedy wipes the last of the fragments from his eyes. His face is still streaked with dirt and shale. He turns, searching for something, anything, to fight back with. Then he remembers... Stiffening, his body set, his eyes narrow, he moves purposefully toward the front of the jeep and crawls under it. Again Smith opens up on him. Bullet after bullet pours into the confined space, nicking the wall, ricocheting off the jeep with a frightening, fluttery, wheezing sound. The firing stops again and in the silence we HEAR a familiar TRICKLE, as in running water....

EXT. RANCH - SMITH

139

re-loads his rifle. Stiffly, he starts slowly down over the rocks toward his unarmed victim...

MACREEDY

140

He has unscrewed the nut and unconnected the gas line with the carburator. A spurt of gasoline is running out. With a quick motion he picks up an empty whisky bottle from the litter-strewn earth. He fills it with gasoline, quickly screws the nut back on. Now he sweeps his necktie free of his collar. Holding it with his teeth, he tears the felt lining free from its silk face. He twists half the lining inside the bottle, knotting the other end securely around the bottle's neck, leaving a long strand dangling.

EXT. RANCH - CLOSE SHOT - SMITH

141

moving rigidly toward the hole. He stops,  
levels his rifle, fires.

EXT. GRAVE - MACREEDY

142

pinned down in the direct line of fire.  
The burst of the rifle stops.

EXT. RANCH - SMITH

143

not more than twenty-five yards away,  
advancing carefully, rifle at the ready.

EXT. GRAVE - MACREEDY

144

lights a match, placing the flame to the  
dangling end of the tie. It catches. He  
flings himself to his feet and with the same  
motion whips the fiery bottle like a foot-  
ball, hard and straight toward Smith. Smith  
fires once, fast and wild. The bottle crashes  
against the rocks at his feet and bursts  
with a shattering explosion. Smith screams  
as the razor-sharp slivers rip his flesh.  
In a puff of flame, his clothes ignite. He  
drops the rifle and goes down, squirming  
frantically on the black ashy ground.

EXT. RANCH - FULL SHOT

145

favoring Macreeedy as he tears out of the  
hole. He hurls himself at Smith. Wooden-  
faced, almost dreamy-eyed, he shovels the  
ashy dirt over Smith's prone chest, putting  
out the fire. Smith struggles halfway to  
his feet. Macreeedy grabs his shoulder,  
helping him up. Smith looks at Macreeedy  
through eyes bleary with fear and pain and  
shock.

Smith (through his teeth)  
Go ahead -- kill me. Now.

145  
CONT'D  
(2)

Macreeedy  
I'd like to kill you now, but you caused too much pain to die quickly.

(a beat)  
You'll be tried in a court of law. You'll be convicted by a jury. Then you'll die.

He drives his right fist against Smith's chin. Smith's head snaps back as far as it can go and then wobbles to rest on his chest. He collapses. Macreeedy blows out his breath hard. He staggers to Liz. As he bends over her...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BLACK ROCK - DAY (DAWN)

146

Liz's jeep, driven by Macreeedy, rolls slowly down the empty main street of the sleeping town. Behind him, under a tarp, the body of the girl lies lifeless across the seat. On the seat beside him is Smith's rifle, the balance a few inches from Macreeedy's elbow. On the right front fender of the jeep Smith sits precariously, his shirt scorched and ragged. He wears a sullen expression of pained indifference.

In b.g., as the jeep passes, isolated lights go on, first in Doc's house, then in two or three others. Macreeedy is oblivious to them.

EXT. JAIL - CLOSE SHOT - A MAN

147

almost completely hidden, looks out grimly from a corner of the jail window. Protruding through the bars, swiveling to follow the progress of the jeep down the street, is the long, ugly muzzle of a rifle.

EXT. MAIN STREET - JEEP

148

as Macreeedy pulls up to the curb in front of the jail and cuts the ignition. He grabs the rifle, and steps around to Smith.

Macreeedy (tonelessly, prodding  
Smith off the fender with his rifle)  
Hands behind your head.

148  
CONT'D  
(2)

Smith complies.

EXT. JAIL

149

as Macreeedy marches Smith up the steps. The  
jail door opens. A man emerges, wearing a  
Mackinaw over his vest and carrying a rifle.  
It is Tim. For a moment Macreeedy eyes him in  
silence. His gun finger tightens on the  
rifle in his hand. Tim's rifle, too, is at  
the ready...

Macreeedy (after a beat)  
Am I going to have trouble with you?

Tim  
Nope. But I sure thought the situation was going  
to be like reversed. I thought I was going to  
have trouble...

(nodding sharply in Smith's direction)  
...with him. I'll take care of him.

Macreeedy (still hesitating)  
Just as you took care of his buddies?

Tim  
Just as I took care of his buddies. Me, an' Doc,  
and Pete....

The SOUND of running feet padding along the  
dirt road increases on SOUND TRACK. Macreeedy  
turns slightly, to see Doc huffing toward him.  
The older man climbs the jail steps and comes  
to an abrupt halt, his eyes going from one to  
the other of the two men in the stand-off.

Doc (to Macreeedy)  
It's all right, Macreeedy...

He pulls Tim's Mackinaw to one side, revealing  
the silver-plated star pinned at the breast.

Doc  
Old Tim here's got his badge back.

Macreeedy swings his rifle from Tim to Smith.  
Tim lowers his, stepping to one side, allowing  
Smith, covered by Macreeedy, to enter the jail.  
He goes in, Doc following. Pete sits silently  
at Tim's desk.

INT. JAIL

In one of the two cells are Coley and Hector.  
In the other, Sam and Hastings.

Macreeedy (looking around)  
Well. The gang is all here.

Tim  
I thought I'd take one last whack at my job. Even  
if Smith killed me for it.

Macreeedy (jerking his head  
toward Smith)  
Put him in with Hastings.

Tim turns his key in the cell door.. Macreeedy  
tiredly goes to Pete at the desk.

Macreeedy  
Your sister's outside, Pete.

Pete rises. Macreeedy halts him momentarily,  
gripping his arm...

Macreeedy (flatly)  
She's dead.

Pete walks dazedly out the door.. Tim grabs  
Smith's shoulder and propels him roughly  
through the cell door. He slams it hard.  
As the clatter of the iron door reverberates  
harshly...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. HOTEL - BLACK ROCK - DAY

151

The townspeople, with Doc f.g., are gathered  
silently in the street, staring sadly, dumbly  
at the hotel before them. Doc wears a dark  
business suit, neat and conservative. The door  
opens (o.s.) and the people look up, their  
eyes lighting with expectancy.

WHAT THEY SEE

152

Macreeedy comes out of the door, carrying his  
suitcase. For a moment he pauses, looking at  
the uplifted faces of the people in the street.  
In the distance we HEAR the horn of a stream-  
liner. Macreeedy goes down the steps, skirts  
the watching crowd and heads for the railroad -  
station. Almost immediately Doc falls in step  
with him. The townspeople, still silent, trail

MOVING SHOT - MACREEDY AND DOC

15271

in f.g., the townspeople behind them. In  
b.g., as we pass, we see the main street just  
as we saw it when Macreeedy entered town a few  
short hours ago.

Macreeedy (walking, after a  
beat, to Doc)  
Tim knows where to find me. if I'm needed.

Doc nods. He blinks and frowns...

Macreeedy  
What's on your mind, Doc?

Doc  
Nothing. Only...about that medal. Can we have it?

Macreeedy  
"We...?" Can who have it?

Doc  
We. (indicating the townspeople, with a vague  
wave of his hand)

Us.

Macreeedy  
Why?

Doc  
Well, we need it, I guess. It's something we can  
maybe build on. This town is wrecked, just as bad  
as if it was bombed out. Maybe it can come back...

Macreeedy  
Some towns come back. Some don't. It depends on  
the people.

A NOISE o.s. attracts Macreeedy's attention.  
He turns, as do Doc and the townsmen.

WHAT THEY SEE

153

In front of the jail, each of them handcuffed,  
are Smith, Coley, Hector, Sam and Hastings.  
Tim and four cops escort them to two State  
Police cars which are parked beside Tim's  
old sedan and another car (presumably belong-  
ing to a member of the press). The news-  
paperman (WITHOUT A PRESS CARD IN HIS HAT)  
stands to one side with Pete. Pete as well  
as Tim have changed clothes; they look clean  
and trim. Coley has his arm in a sling.  
Hector's hat hides the bandage on his head.

BACK TO SCENE

154

Macreeedy resumes walking toward the abandoned station, with Doc at his side and the people behind him. The train pulls in.

Doc (still pressing)

That medal would help.

Macreeedy is silent. He walks on, to the platform. He pauses, looking at the people silently in his wake and then at Doc. He takes a black velvet-covered box from his pocket -- the box containing the medal -- looks at it, and slowly hands it to Doc.

Doc

Thanks, Macreeedy. Thanks for everything.

Macreeedy turns and exits from SHOT. The people look after him.

EXT. PLATFORM

155

as Macreeedy boards the train.

EXT. STREET

156

The cars in front of the jail U-turn and start off with the prisoners. The people move silently toward the train.

EXT. TRAIN

157

Macreeedy is at the passageway. Slowly the train moves out.

INT. PASSAGEWAY OF TRAIN

158

Macreeedy and a conductor stand at the doorway. The town is seen behind them and the people standing there. In the distance, Tim's car recedes.

Conductor (curiously)

What's the excitement? What happened?



A shooting. Macreeedy

158  
CONT'D  
(2)

Conductor  
I knew it was something. First time a streamliner  
stopped here in four years.

Macreeedy  
Second time.

He walks into the train.

LONG SHOT - TRAIN

159

gathering speed, diminishing, far, far into  
the horizon.

FADE OUT:

THE END